

The Nation

Vol. XX., No. 22.]
Registered as a Newspaper.

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 1917.

[PRICE 6D.
Postage: U.K. 4d.; Abroad 1d.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
EVENTS OF THE WEEK	721	The Scottish Timber Scandal. By One Who Knows	735
POLITICS AND AFFAIRS:—		War Loan Depreciation Fund. By D. M. Mason, M.P.	735
The Answer to Potsdam	724	POETRY:—	
What the Government Must Do	725	Two Poems by Soldiers.—	
The Meaning of the German Retreat	726	(1) The Last Post. By Robert Graves. (2) Died of Wounds. By Siegfried Sassoon	735
Back to the Corn Laws?	727	THE WORLD OF BOOKS. By Penguin	736
A LONDON DIARY. By A Wayfarer	728	REVIEWS:—	
LIFE AND LETTERS:—		The Alternative to Mittel-europa	737
The Triumph of Herbert Spencer. By Havelock Ellis	730	New Light on Shelley	738
The Official of Calvary	732	Some Faithful Failures	740
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:—		THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Lucellum	742
How Long and Why? By J. A. H.	733		
The Necessity for State Purchase. By J. T. Rhys, G. King Lewis, and Theodore Nelid	734		

[The Editor will be pleased to consider manuscripts if accompanied by stamped and addressed envelopes. He accepts no responsibility, however, for manuscripts submitted to him.]

Events of the Week.

THE movement on the Western front during the last week is one of the most arresting in the war. Even its beginning is obscure, for the evacuation of Grandcourt seems now to have been part of the operation which is still in progress. Indeed, from the beginning of the month there has been a suspicious ease about the advance from Beaucourt, north of the Ancre, and the neighboring positions south of the river. But Grandcourt was probably evacuated on the 5th or 6th; it was occupied on the 7th, and between this event and the beginning of the larger retirement there were eighteen days during which the British commanders on the spot were apparently in ignorance of what was afoot. They developed their offensive towards Serre and Miraumont. The southern and south-eastern slopes of Serre Hill were climbed until this terrible little fortress, which had resisted us so long, seemed to lie between our finger and thumb. Miraumont was similarly isolated. The strength of its defence was an outlying hill to the south and west. This was overrun, but could not be maintained against the immediate counter-attack, and the troops had to be content with the southern and western slopes. It was this movement, however, that was the immediate precursor of the retreat.

MIRAUMONT lies almost due east of Serre and about one and a-half miles away. To hold it was, therefore, to threaten the cutting off of Serre, and the evacuation presumably at once began. The capture of Petit-Miraumont completed the theft of the defences of Miraumont. But it was Serre that was first occupied after Petit-Miraumont, and on Sunday the fact of a retirement could not be ignored. Serre at once exposed

Gommecourt and Miraumont, and the pressure which was applied over the whole area from Saily to Gommecourt found the resistance loosened over a front of eleven miles. The Butte de Warlencourt, so ardently beset by our troops for so long, Warlencourt-Eaucourt, Pys, and Miraumont were occupied on Monday; and the same day found the British in the outskirts of Le Barque, Irlès, and Pusieux-au-Mont. On Tuesday Le Barque and Ligny were entered, and in the night Gommecourt was captured. The following day Thillo and Pusieux-au-Mont were occupied. There was little fighting anywhere. A few snipers were come upon in the broken ground; in some places small compact bodies of troops with machine guns have covered the retirement, and in Pusieux there was even a little street fighting.

BUT, on the whole, we have paid extremely little for our progress, and, in fact, we have no idea where the main concentration of the enemy is. If it were not improbable on strategical grounds, he might even be at Cambrai. We have secured no prisoners or material. We have merely been ceded enough broken ground to nullify the preparations for a great offensive. The enemy seems to be pulling steadily from near Saily at the line which is fastened at Arras and originally hung about Serre. When he had pulled away this perilous salient, he left a dangerous angle at Gommecourt. Another pull and that was passed; and the probability is that he will gradually evacuate each of these sharp salients as he produces them. For the moment, the situation is in solution. No position has yet been revealed that is substantially stronger than those from which he began to move a week ago. But each position he takes up is a little more of a handicap for us. The enemy thus has an immediate advantage, a respite at least. But it is probable he means to secure a more permanent gain. It is idle to suggest that such and such positions, say, a line from Arras to Saily, would be no better than the death trap which the Somme battle had created, because they would be in the plain. Positions on the Allied as well as on the German side have been held for months which were all the time overlooked.

THE moral balance-sheet of this transaction is harder to cast up. The retirement demonstrates the moral courage of the German Staff, apart from its prudence. Yet the German reports contained no hint of the retreat until Thursday. It will not make much difference to the German people, still less to the Army, if the ultimate halting place proves stable. Soldiers as well as civilians are at the mercy of the ruling power for knowledge not only of what is going on, but also of its significance. What, for instance, can distinguish a night relief from a retreat in the mind of a soldier who is going to billets? Sven Hedin was told, and believed, that the front was quiet when he was within twenty miles of the critical point of the first battle of Ypres. It is significant that there have been no surrenders. The Allies do not show up so well. It is their business to harry a retreat. They did not even know of it! And we find correspondents explaining the retire-

ment as due to causes which should, if true, carry us to Berlin.

* * *

THE Germans have at length admitted that they "evacuated, voluntarily and in accordance with our plans, several days ago" a portion of the foremost positions on both banks of the Ancre. "The defence has been transferred to another line which had been prepared." The *communiqué* continues, in language in which, for once, we can trace no exaggeration, to suggest that our own troops were left in ignorance of the German movements. Therefore they "felt their way forward hesitatingly," although they were superior numerically, and the weak rearguard detachments inflicted considerable losses on our advancing patrols. The Germans claim to have taken 11 officers and 174 men, with four machine-guns, and there seems no reason to doubt the claim, although we have no captures to report. The small patch of torn ground which has been surrendered to us imposes great difficulties on advancing troops. Professor Pollard suggests that the "ultimate" retirement will be to a line from La Bassée through Douai, St. Quentin, and La Fère, and this may be so. But much depends upon when the ultimate retreat will come about. Already the British front hangs round the Germans in a much smoother curve; but we have still no knowledge of where the new enemy line is.

* * *

LESS ambiguous is the development of the campaign in Mesopotamia. General Maude has wiped out the stain of General Townshend's surrender. Two days after the first abortive attack on the Sanna-i-Yat position he again moved against the Turks, and obtained a footing in the southern end of the line. The next day, under cover of a further attack, he crossed the Tigris at the Shumran bend of the river, made a bridge, and by nightfall was strongly established on the north bank, east of Kut. On Saturday the Sanna-i-Yat position was forced, and Kut was occupied. Over 1,200 prisoners were taken with much material. The pursuit of the retreating Turks was at once taken up, and they were attacked at a point thirty miles beyond Kut, and some sixty miles from Baghdad. In their retreat the Turks abandoned a considerable amount of equipment. They even tried to sink 5-inch howitzers in the river. A gunboat that had been abandoned as Townshend fell back on Kut was recovered, and the pursuit is now continuing with gunboats and cavalry. General Maude has undoubtedly accomplished a fine feat, and it seems probable that he will advance on Baghdad. If he should do so, he ought to take it, since the Turks have liabilities north of the Taurus which they cannot ignore.

* * *

IN his deliberate transition from a state of peace to a state of war, President Wilson has passed the second milestone. The rupture of diplomatic relations has now been followed by the adoption of "armed neutrality." This was the essence of the quiet and rather hesitating message which he laid before Congress on Monday. When he spoke there was still, in his view, no "overt act" (for the news of the "Laconia's" sinking came later) which called for a directly hostile reply. But the tying up of American shipping in port none the less amounted to a success for the German blockade. Mr. Wilson asked, therefore, for authority and credit to provide "adequate means of protection" for American shipping. The plan is at first to arm American ships, and to insure them against war-risks, and for these purposes a credit of £20,000,000 is sought. The American Press, at all events in the Eastern States, is evidently much hotter in its indignation than Congress,

which seemed at first to hesitate to give the President unlimited powers, and talked of insisting that munition ships shall not be armed. It will, however, certainly agree to the defence of food and passenger ships.

* * *

IN the caution of Congress there clearly lies the explanation and justification of Mr. Wilson's deliberate procedure. He cannot rush the Pacifists or the Conservatives. Meantime, the "overt act" has occurred, and it is understood that the President so regards it. The great Cunard liner, "Laconia," a modern vessel of 18,000 tons, carrying mails and passengers, was sunk on Sunday night on her voyage from New York. Two torpedoes struck her; the submarine was clearly seen, and even spoken to, after the disaster, but no warning of any kind was given. Three of the passengers are dead and three missing, and of the crew six are missing and six injured. Two of the dead passengers, Mrs. and Miss Hoy, were American citizens, and so, probably, is the third dead passenger. The effect of this outrage on American opinion has been considerable. It has brought a state of war much nearer, and so also has the delay in releasing the American prisoners from the "Yarrowdale." But it is unlikely that American war-vessels will be used to protect shipping, unless encounters between the armed ships and the submarines gradually force this measure on the administration, or unless the disclosure of Germany's vile plot with Mexico makes for an immediate war.

* * *

THIS last provocation is the most insulting of all. Germany, the *trouble-fête* of the world, is now shown to be the author of a plot to draw Mexico and Japan into a war with the United States, which was to break over her head the moment the submarine warfare became intolerable to her. Mexico was to be compensated with the annexation of New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. This base and violent plan, which bears the signature of the German Foreign Minister, was conceived in the moment when Germany was be-daubing the States with words of flattery and friendship. Mr. Wilson has, of course, produced the evidence of it in order to strengthen his hands for dealing with an enemy Government whose character he knew, though his people did not.

* * *

THE German Chancellor made an ineffective yet defiant statement to the Reichstag on Tuesday. He dwelt on the reserves contained in the "Sussex" Note, and urged that they relieve him (as verbally they do) of the charge of breaking faith with America. He adopted the typically German strategy of the offensive-defensive, complained of the brusqueness of Mr. Wilson's procedure (a strange charge to bring against a record of almost limitless patience), and generally assailed the one-sidedness of American neutrality. America had provided munitions for one side only (a departure from her precedent in the Mexican civil war); she had protested only verbally against the British blockade, and generally had taken no real stand against Great Britain on the basis of her own traditional reading of sea-law. These charges, be it noted, are partly true, and ought to be weighed by those in this country who have complained of American neutrality. It was always a partial and friendly neutrality. For the rest, the Chancellor made some play with Sir Percy Scott's prediction and defence of submarine ruthlessness against commerce, and raked up the story of the South African Concentration Camps. He professed to be more than satisfied with the progress of the submarine campaign, but gave no figures. His peroration was confident, and declared that Germany had been "morally strengthened by the scornful refusal of our readiness for peace."

IN one passage of his speech, the Chancellor dwelt amply but rather vaguely on the internal reforms of a liberal tendency which Germany will adopt after the war. In these premises he clearly is attempting to satisfy the rising temper of quasi-revolutionary anti-militarism, of which the Potsdam by-election gives evidence. The Prussian Windsor has been deprived of its member, Dr. Liebknecht, by his condemnation. As his successor, the "minority" Socialists put forward Dr. Franz Mehring, a well-known author, whose seventy years had not saved him from imprisonment as a political suspect. The case resembled that of Rossendale, but, while Rossendale polled 23 per cent. for an imprisoned pacifist candidate, Potsdam must have cast at least 80 per cent. (and probably much more) of its poll for a pacifist ex-prisoner. The "majority" Socialists and the non-Socialists were simply obliterated. It was an election, not for the Reichstag, but for the Diet, and was taken under the indirect, open, "three-class" system. This divides the electors into three compartments, according to wealth, each class returning an equal number of delegate electors. Usually in Prussia, the two upper classes, representing hundreds, vote down the third class, representing thousands. In this case the middle-class must have been nearly as revolutionary as the working-class. It was a tremendous demonstration for peace and against militarism.

* * *

THE Prime Minister gave an alarming tone to his announcement to the House of Commons on the restriction of imports, declaring that our food stocks were "lower than they have been within recollection," and that there might be "disaster" in front of the nation if it did not accept drastic measures for dealing with the submarine peril. The three methods he proposed were the hunting down of the submarines, the building of merchant ships, and the cutting down of sea-transport to essential commodities—objects for which he and his brother Ministers should long ago have taken thought and made provision. The reduction of imports he proposed concerned tea, cocoa, coffee, fruit, paper, and alcoholic drinks. The second phase of the Prime Minister's speech was a part revival of his land policy, linked with another act of resurrectionist politics, a harking-back to the Corn Laws. Able-bodied labor is to have a guaranteed wage of 25s. a week, farmers a guaranteed price for their cereals and potatoes, lasting, on a sliding scale, till 1922, and landlords, it appears, a guaranteed rent, with a veto on a rise. This is no true basis for a great land settlement after the war, and no cure for "plough-shyness," for it is labor that the land wants, and that the policy of all-into-the-Army denies it. Mr. George's speech created a run on the shops, and prices rapidly rose. There is now a talk of compulsory rationing. But this is more easily said than done. The late Government made an elaborate experiment in this direction, and decided that rationing would be at once a slow and an ineffectual remedy.

* * *

THE first of the weekly official statements as to the casualties of the submarine campaign, which Sir Edward Carson promised, has now been issued. It shows the number of arrivals and clearances to have maintained the average of the first eighteen days of the month. The sum gives a rough measure of the risks taken. As there were 4,581 vessels risked and only twenty-five British casualties, the sinkings were under .54 per cent. The British vessels sunk included fifteen over 1,600 tons, six under 1,600 tons, and four fishing vessels. Twelve other vessels were attacked but escaped, an average immunity of over 30 per cent. We are not provided with the figures as to the proportion of the twelve vessels which

were armed; but it is probable that the bulk had a gun, and the opposite would be true of the majority of those sunk.

* * *

MUCH indignation has been caused in Holland by the attack on seven Dutch ships, towards the end of last week, at the western end of the English Channel. These vessels left Falmouth under Dutch orders and after a promise had been extracted from the German Government guaranteeing them immunity as far as possible. This conditional guarantee applied to the date of February 22nd, on which the vessels left; but six of them were torpedoed at five in the same afternoon, and the seventh later, without any attempt to examine their papers. The German explanation happens, on this occasion, to be logical. The Germans only gave conditional exemption for February 22nd, since they were unable to warn all their submarine commanders in time. But the point at once arises: Why did they give any undertaking at all, since it was bound to be illusory? And the Dutch, who neither asked for, nor accepted, instructions from the British Admiralty, seem to have shown a touching trust in Germany's good faith. Knowing what she is, it would surely be better for the Dutch either to look to the safety of their vessels by arming them, or to arrange with the Admiralty to give them suitable instructions.

* * *

A BRILLIANT and significant little victory has been won for women in the very home of reaction. Lord Buckmaster's Bill to enable women to qualify for the solicitor's profession has received its second reading almost unopposed. This is some compensation for the recent defeat of the effort to break down the opposition to their admission to the Bar. The result shows that the obstacles in their path are now interested, and sectional. Where any close corporation of men, be it barristers or trade-unionists, has, or thinks it has, an interest in resisting them, it will still resist. But the general disinterested view has transcended this tradition. There are few, if any, solicitors in the House of Lords, and, therefore, it had no sufficient motive to defend privilege. The speaking was not on suffragist *versus* anti-suffragist lines, for while Lord Halsbury, of course, opposed, Lord Loreburn, still an anti-suffragist, supported the change. The result is of good augury, none the less, for electoral reform.

* * *

THE Home Office has made up its mind to act in the sense of Mr. Herbert Samuel's early threats against the Russian Jews in England. It is going to hand over to Russia those "friendly aliens," who will not enlist in the British Army. A parallel arrangement is to apply to British subjects in Russia. It is said, of course, that this meets the case of the political refugee: if he will not return to Russia, he has his remedy, and can serve under our flag. Why should he? He has no country. Russia is no home for him, but he is not on that account a British citizen. He will be forced to risk his life without the motive of patriotism. It is doubtful, however, whether an alien can legally be deported to his own (or any particular) country, though he may be expelled. If the House of Lords supports the verdict of Lord Reading in the Duc de Chateau-Thierry's case (to the effect that this "refugee" could not be deported to France), the Home Office will have to come to Parliament for legislation. If Parliament assents, it will have wiped out formally our traditional right of asylum. France, the older Ally and larger creditor of Russia, has stiffly maintained her rights, and has not conscripted or deported her refugees.

Politics and Affairs.

THE ANSWER TO POTSDAM.

ONCE or twice in the course of this war it has been possible to catch a momentary glimpse of the authentic mind of the German people. The high command, which imposes its will on the civil government and the gagged masses, with an equal disregard of policy and popular feeling, affords no clue to the national temper. The Chancellor, steering an uneasy course between the dictation of Hindenburg and the blustering of Reventlow, is scarcely a surer guide. At length, in the by-election at Potsdam, the revelation has come. One would as soon expect a revolutionary pacifism from Potsdam as an outbreak of Republican radicalism from the Royal burgh of Windsor. None the less, Potsdam has by a decisive majority elected to the Prussian Diet a "Minority" Socialist of the extreme school. In succession to Dr. Liebknecht, deprived of his seat by his imprisonment, it has chosen as its representative Dr. Franz Mehring, who has just been released from a long period of internment as an untried political suspect.

The result means far more than an election to the Reichstag, for it took place by open, indirect voting under the Prussian Three-Class franchise, which sorts the electors in distinct compartments, according to their wealth. The lowest class can never alone elect a member. Dr. Mehring could not have been elected unless he had obtained a separate majority among the middle-class electors, as well as among the working class. It is a demonstration against the persecution to which these two brave men have been subjected, but it is also an overwhelming manifestation for peace. One by-election may not suffice to test a people's spirit, but others have pointed in the same direction. We must allow for the fact that a good many electors of Potsdam may have voted for Dr. Mehring by way of marking their resentment against the system which permits the military to imprison political suspects without trial. But one may also safely assume that no one would have voted for him who shared the views of Count Reventlow and Herr Bassermann on the war and the settlement. The exceptional character of the election furnishes, however, exactly the test which instructs us as to the progress of what Germans call "the new orientation." It is, in plain words, a vote against Prussian militarism. No sane thinker means by that term the fact that Germany had a large and efficient army. Geography required that, as it required from us a large and efficient Navy. What we mean by the term is partly the blustering use of this potential force in diplomacy, partly the aggressive use of actual force in warfare, partly the egoistic disregard of treaties, but chiefly, as the foundation of its ascendancy at home, the theory of the supremacy of the military over the civil power. These must have been the issues fought out at Potsdam, and we are entitled to say that the result shows a middle-class as well as a working-class majority against militarism. Two classes, voting separately, have declared against the protraction of the war for purposes of conquest, and against the supreme military dictatorship at home. Militarism is suffering defeat at the hands of the only power which can permanently overthrow it, the German democracy itself.

Of this German democracy the statesmanship of the Entente has not as yet taken account. It is small wonder, perhaps, that we have ignored it. We have had to reckon with a Chancellor overborne, in spite of a certain

personal moderation, by stronger forces, and with a military command which represented nothing but the theory of consummate ruthlessness. For the best part of three years the foreground has been occupied by the Germany of the "Lusitania" outrage and the Belgian deportations. The Germany of the Potsdam ballot-boxes has been gagged, intimidated, and repressed. In our war-measures we were forced to ignore it, for it was impotent to govern, or even to deflect, policy. From the moment that peace became, what it has been since December, a practical issue, to ignore the German nation would show an unpardonable lack of statesmanship. To this democracy the rulers of the Empire will have to give an account when war is over, and the shadow of that reckoning will weigh upon them, when at last they have before them definite terms of peace, which they must either accept or reject. Hitherto the public documents of the Entente have been addressed to two audiences—to the rulers of the Central Empires, whom no one wished to spare or placate, and to neutral public opinion. A third audience emerges from this election—the German people which must be sharply distinguished from its rulers. We know to-day that this people desires a peace which probably differs in no essential from the peace which would satisfy the saner elements among ourselves. The electors of Dr. Mehring want no strategical safeguards from Belgium; they do not dream of extorting an indemnity from France; they would applaud a liberal handling of the Polish and Balkan problems; they care nothing about Germany's military road to the East, because they want no future wars; they are the warm partisans of Mr. Wilson's League of Nations.

To a democracy in this mood no authoritative voice has yet spoken from our side a reassuring word. The threat of the Paris Resolutions hangs over it, a menace not merely to the capitalists but to the wage-earners. Our speeches, if not our Notes, invite the most extreme interpretation of our policy, and when the German Press interprets them to mean that our aim is the total dismemberment of Germany's chief allies and the conquest of some portions of German home territory and of all her colonies, there is no denial which the German Moderates can quote. It is small wonder that the advocacy of a reasonable peace has ceased in the German Press; the miracle is that the people of Potsdam still insist on recording by its votes its own passionate desire for peace. The violence of words on our side, the violence of lawless deeds on the other side, have worked in recent weeks for the reciprocal stimulation of an extreme attitude.

The consequence is that the war continues, and cannot but continue. From the events of the next weeks and months, however, a tendency will emerge. They will not in all human probability bring a final military decision. But such happenings as the evacuation of the Serre salient and the recovery of Kut, if they continue, and if no contrary events should contradict them, will give the measure of a tide. The flow of events should move visibly, if slowly, towards the distant end. It is for statesmanship in such a case to anticipate this end. We can see, and the enemy can see, what must eventually happen. Prevision can work out the sum on paper. Must the world wait for peace until this calculation has been verified in millions of casualties and in more devastated kingdoms? In such a case the enemy will fight on only if he believes that our aims are incompatible with his own future existence. So far we have discouraged the spirit which has voted at Potsdam. There is a case to-day for appealing to it, for feeding it with reasonable hopes, for assuring those who hesitate to rally to it, that confidence

in the goodwill of Europe is not inconsistent with a sane German patriotism. We shall not get a moderate Germany until we make a moderate Entente.

We would urge that whether it take the form of a Note to Mr. Wilson, of a speech in the House, or of an interview, the next authoritative statement of the Allies' policy should be addressed in intention to the European peoples, not excluding the people of Germany—the people which ardently longs for peace, and votes for the extremest opponents of Prussian militarism. It might be drafted somewhat as follows:—

"The many aims which the Allies pursue in this complicated struggle can all be reduced to a single term. They are resolved that the war shall end with a settlement which shall banish from European civilization not merely the risk of the recurrence of such a calamity, but also the menace and oppression of an armed peace. In all the warring nations they believe that the masses are animated by the same resolve, and their study will be to create international institutions which will give scope and illumination to this goodwill. First among the guarantees of a secure future they place the League of Nations, which President Wilson has sketched. It must lay down a procedure for the pacific settlement of disputes so simple that no Government can ignore it without convicting itself in the eyes of its own citizens of deliberate aggression. It must provide, by the definite pledges of the signatory Powers, for the massing of an overwhelming co-operative force, which will repress the Power that in future meditates or commits aggression.

"The Allies note that the Central Empires have, in general terms, expressed their readiness to consider such a scheme. If their adherence to it is to influence the immediate future, it must be the preliminary and not the sequel to the war-settlement. There are several tests by which the value of their adherence may be tried. One of them is their willingness to make full reparation for the wrongs committed, in violation of treaties and the common law of nations, in the course of this war, especially against Belgium. Another is their readiness to assent to a general reduction of the scale of European armaments. The chief test of all will be their consent to contribute to the liberal solution of those European problems of nationality which made for past unrest, and contain in themselves, if they should remain unsolved, the seeds of future wars. In some extreme cases, notably French-speaking Lorraine and the Italian-speaking Trentino, the Allies do not exclude the cession of territory as a means of settlement, where the will of a population, ascertained through neutral agency, demands this form of liberation. It lies with the Central Empires themselves in other cases to avoid this drastic measure by grants of autonomy which would assure to South Slavs, Techecho-Slovaks, and Roumanians the reality of self-government. The independence of Poland has become a European question, and must be established by European guarantees. Subject to the restoration of an independent Serbian Kingdom, the exact drawing of national boundaries in the Balkans may be left to a European Conference. The domination of the Turkish Straits by the Ottoman Empire must give way to an effective measure of international control, the remnant of the massacred Armenian people must be liberated from Turkish misrule, and measures taken for the relief of other Turkish populations.

"In the acceptance of such conditions as these,

the Allies would recognize a pledge of the intention of the Central Empires to make their contribution to the future contentment of Europe. They recognize on their part that the settlement must be such that no nation will wish to disturb it. With the legitimate enterprise and economic expansion of their present enemies they have no wish to interfere. The restoration of the German colonies, or of equivalent areas in Africa, will be a natural subject for arrangement, and with it the recognition, under due safeguards, of German enterprises in Turkey. Believing, as they do, that peace must be based on common work, and the interchange of economic services, the Allies are prepared to discuss terms which will prevent wars of trade and tariffs in the future, and assure the principles of the open door to overseas markets, and of access to raw materials. They are willing also to consider the future regulation of sea-power.

"To a League for the maintenance of peace, the Allies will not hesitate to bring their contribution, but they see for it no assured future unless it be based on the reparation of past wrongs, on the restitution of territory won by force, and on guarantees for the observance of laws and treaties which bridle violence and protect the weak. Conquest and economic domination form no part of their aims. They harbor no purpose which promises injury to any of the peoples opposed to them. Their aim is rather to hasten the day when these peoples, appalled and enlightened by the common calamity of this war, may co-operate in the common task of building an orderly and enduring Society of Nations."

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST DO.

WHEN the Prime Minister informs the country that there may be "disaster" in front of it, it has a right to know what has happened to imperil the fixed and ancient sources of its security. We remain the greatest maritime and naval Power in the world, and the submarine is no invention of yesterday. Why, then, has our defensive been so weakened and the enemy's attacks so strengthened, that, in the third year of the war, the people of these islands are called on to tighten their belts and reduce their supplies of sea-borne goods? The cause is twofold. We have failed to "hunt" the submarine from the seas, and we have reduced our carrying power below its margin of safety. The first is a failure of sea-strategy; the second of forethought and statesmanship. The smaller defect was, in the main, one of sheer departmental remissness, and the nation must make its account for it with Mr. Balfour's administration of the Admiralty. The second and capital error concerns the whole conduct of the war. All the lessons of the past, and of the masters who taught them, have been thrown away, and we have insisted on simultaneously maintaining a threefold effort—a series of land expeditions on many fronts, near and far, a gigantic naval offensive in every ocean, and a policy of colossal subsidies. The result is that one activity has acted as a brake on another. We might have kept up our maritime war and our subsidies indefinitely. We might also have maintained a great expedition to France and Flanders and a defensive strategy in the East without crippling our financial resources or the safe transit of our supplies. But since the German submarine has re-arisen from the deep, we have found that our Salonikan expedition, our Mesopotamian expedition, our Egyptian expeditions,

our Colonial expeditions, have embarrassed and straitened the carrying power even of the greatest maritime nation that the world has ever known. All these enterprises sprang from the policy of forcing the main body of the nation into the Army. There lay the temptation to a scheme of distant campaigns protected by the Navy and fed by the mercantile marine. Conscription alone could support these gigantic levies, and the country must now sustain the drain on industrialism that conscription has involved. To this it must add the dispersion of its strength and the weakening of its finances and its transport service inevitably associated with the great Balkan adventure which took shape in the expedition to Salonika. The main loss and waste of our shipping occur in the Mediterranean. Every addition to our activities there increases the peril to our supplies. Every curtailment of them modifies it.

This military view of the war has thus prevailed against all its assailants, even when they included the more prudent of our military chiefs. It has withdrawn a great number of vessels from civil transport. It has reduced the attempt to repair our losses with a fresh supply of sea-carriers. The Ministers who begged for the return to our building yards of the shipwrights and engineers absorbed by the Army, either pleaded in vain or met with a late and grudging response. The military party made a second draft on the vital force of Britain in the stripping of its fields, never at the poor best of British agriculture too well supplied with workers. It is ungenerous for Mr. George to taunt the farmers with "plough shyness," and useless to offer them a bribe for overcoming it. What the land wants is labor, and policy empties it of labor. When labor was available, as in 1915, the acreage under tilth increased; when, as in the following year, it was withdrawn, the same area shrank, and the lure of high prices was in vain. Mr. George's Minister for Agriculture has striven to the point of resignation and insubordination to get his laborers out of the clutches of the War Office, and it is obvious that if his chief had supported him he would have succeeded. Yet to-day the directors of our war-policy have crippled the scheme for attaching 100,000 women to the land by their competitive and more attractive plan for adding them to the Army. Mr. George has only to say the word, and this process of denudation is reversed. The responsibility is his, and if the safety of the country is imperilled, it must be pressed upon him as the heaviest burden ever laid on a British Minister. He can replenish the farmer's supply of labor. He can turn the maximum force of manual skill into the construction of new ships. But, above all, he can reduce to a minimum the military demands on transport. We imagine that if, say, 200 ships of adequate size were transferred to food carriage, the Mediterranean services could be maintained, and the threatened shortage of food averted. The people are entitled to demand some such measure of precaution, and we cannot imagine a voice of reason that would dispute it.

For what is the prospect? The country is again bidden, by a hundred voices, to look forward to a protracted conflict, and to expect no dramatic conclusion to it in the great and bloody enterprise which is preparing in the West. Since the war began, statesmanship has been an abandoned industry, and all talk or hope of peace or of a reconstructed Europe is discouraged. From the foe we will hear nothing, and, indeed, he has now little enough to say, while, so far as words and gestures can go, America's mediation or intervention has been brushed aside. Mr. George's own language merely

stokes up the passion of the struggle without adding a tittle to its moral strength, while it evokes an answering flame of enmity from our foes. If, therefore, Europe is as far from settlement as ever, and the damages and ferocities of submarine warfare must go on, prudence would seem to dictate an economy of material resources, and, above all, a vigilant guarding of the prime resource of all—the lives and spirit of the British peoples. Some concentration of effort there must be, for even our riches are a dwindling treasure, and belligerents, short of food, short of money, short of iron and steel, and short of lives, have now to face an impoverished, as well as a continually embittered, existence. If the true perspective of the war had been kept from the first, and we had thought of sea-power and how to maintain it, instead of land-power and how to display it in three quarters of the globe at once, the submarine menace might hardly have been heard of after Lord Fisher had brought its first enterprise to naught, or, by the mere abundance of our shipping, would have been greatly reduced. Now that it has come, the feeding of our folk must be the first thought in the mind of executive statesmanship, and the cutting down of the cost of the war the second. An expenditure of nearly six millions a day cannot go on simultaneously with a reduction of imports which automatically reduces the range of our export trade, and with a policy of raiding every British industry until the earning power of the nation dwindles to a fraction of its pre-war strength. The coach is thus racing downhill, and the driver applies the whip instead of the brake. But the process can be reversed. The first act of the new Ministry should have been to take stock of our resources, and to distribute them between the more and the less pressing calls upon them. When this has been done, and not before, we can make our account with the future.

THE MEANING OF THE GERMAN RETREAT.

If we could judge the war dispassionately, we should be compelled to confess that Germany is still the master of surprises. Nothing that she has done since August, 1914, has quite the same look of cool purpose as her deeds of the last few months, and particularly of this week. We are constantly led by the triviality of her speeches, apologies, and explanations into doing less than justice to her deeds. We tend to over-estimate a certain fraying of the nerves that has overtaken the civilians of all nations, and to depreciate actions which have long been matured by calm and experienced soldiers. It is almost impossible at the moment to see things in their true perspective. Everything seems out of scale. We are in the midst of the most lawless and inhuman sea campaign the modern world has known. We are threatened by the Prime Minister with disaster if we do not adopt some unspecified change of life. An incredible financial operation has raised in a few weeks a sum that simply numbs the imagination. And, finally, we have the retreat of an army on the Western front, which stood its ground when only two-thirds as strong as it is to-day. We have obviously come to critical times, and everything depends upon our seizing and retaining the true bearing of the situation.

Although we have raised over £1,000,000,000 in the new War Loan, we must realize that, in a true sense, we are in a state of siege. There can be no possible doubt of the gravity of the issue raised by the submarine campaign, and, so far as one can see, there is, at present, no trace of any reasonable counter-measure. We are assured that the Navy is devoting all its energy and

resource to dealing with the submarines. But when we examine the chances of any stimulation in production, either of food or shipbuilding, or of any better handling of the problem of distribution, we are met by chaos. Ministers confine themselves to making inflated departmental claims, and there is no power to correlate or co-ordinate them. Yet we have this month lost something like 500,000 tons of shipping, net; and, for the purposes of the moment, we may write off at least 50, if not a 100, per cent. more. In the face of such figures it is evident that either the Army or the civilians must make considerable sacrifices, and, if the shipping casualties should rise, both would alike suffer. It is true we have the admission of the German Chancellor that a number of submarines have not returned, and the obvious reason is that they are sunk. But against this we have to set the fact that there have recently been some extremely heavy neutral losses, and these cannot but have a deterrent effect upon the neutral shipping that has managed to risk the perils of the "barred zones."

The outlook is thus threatening and almost critical on the sea. If it is to be improved there must be a radical change in the method of handling the situation. But this may now also be said of the war upon land. The event towards which our efforts had been directed for almost five continuous months has at length come to pass; but it has found our soldiers wanting. The greatest retreat on the West since the Marne has taken place; but in this case almost all the honors go to the enemy. It is true that we cannot pass any final judgment on the retirement until we know its dimensions. But we know something of its manner, and it is not encouraging. For some time our Army had been relentlessly pressing the sector from which the Germans retreated; yet we find that the enemy silently slips away, leaving few prisoners or material behind him. When the Russians escaped from Warsaw by the sacrifice of a strong rearguard and the garrison of Novo Georgievsk, we justly appreciated their achievement. But the Germans evacuated Grandcourt without our knowledge; and they have since abandoned one place after another—Serre, Miraumont, Warlencourt—which we had been battering and isolating for weeks, and have staved off pursuit with a handful of snipers. The convenience of the operation for them is remarkable. The submarine campaign requires time to produce its effect. Hence the Germans fall back from their torn and chaotic trench positions, and leave them as a heritage to us. They fall back towards their railroad, towards firmer ground. We have to change our positions, march away from our communications into the wild morass which our own guns have churned into mud and slime. Clearly it is almost impossible for the methods elaborated until now to deal with this situation. A renewed great offensive would want time for preparation. We should require to build new roads, tramways, and railway tracks; and we fear that, though we might know how to cope with a retreat of ten miles, we have no knowledge of how to take advantage of a retreat of the depth of a trench system. How to get guns over three or four miles of shell holes filled with mud and water—this is the question which must at this moment be exercising the minds of our generals.

It is, of course, true that the retreat implies an advantage on our side. It is in fact the belated dividend of the Somme. Germany virtually acknowledges our victory in that battle. We tore a hole in her line through which we could take her at a disadvantage. We produced a salient, defined by the towns Arras, Gommecourt, and Sailly. It was roughly a semi-circle, exposing to cross fire from front, flank, and rear a considerable

bulk of the territory within it. At present the Germans have only evacuated the smaller salients which we had produced on the open flank from Serre to Gueudecourt. But if they should choose to abandon the whole salient and fall back upon the line Arras-Sailly, we could only infer that abler minds were directing the enemy than ever before. The Germany which determined to hold Combles, Thiepval, Pozières, and the rest at all costs was a much weaker opponent than the Germany which will abandon positions that can only be retained at a prohibitive price. The first was weak and stupid; the second is prudent and formidable.

And, above all, it is bewildering. We know that there is on the Western front a vast concentration of German forces, and yet we find this new wisdom in economy of forces. If the Germans were to fall back to the Arras-Sailly line they would probably regain the use of from ten to fifteen divisions for other purposes. We can assume with reasonable certainty that the Germans will not allow their forces to lie idle on the West. The simple defensive is not at all in keeping with the Prussian tradition. Where they will strike, or when, or how, we do not know. It has been suggested that the Germans would like to restore the war of manœuvres in the hope that it would yield swifter and greater profits, for it is certain that the losses were heavier in the first six weeks of the war than ever since. And a possible method of ending the war of positions would be to retreat and thereby induce us to follow. What is certain is that this retirement in some way fits in with the German plan, that it is not made under any sort of compulsion, but with a coolness and deliberation that must win our appreciation; that it was not made until new forces had been concentrated on the West, and a new and formidable blow had been struck at our communications. It is possible that the war of movements will be on us before we are aware. Or it may be that Germany meditates an assault at some other part of our line, and is merely hamstringing our offensive on the Ancre. At all events, the curtain has once more gone up on greater events, and, so far, we have little cause to congratulate ourselves on our share in them.

BACK TO THE CORN LAWS?

IN a single bold swoop of exposition last Friday, Mr. George sketched the outlines of a rural revolution. A State-guaranteed minimum wage, a similarly guaranteed scale of prices, fixed rents, and compulsory cultivation are the four pillars of the new agricultural order. The support of these proposals is not wholly due to a recognition of the urgency of the food trouble or to the new confidence reposed in Mr. George by those classes which before the war were his bitterest opponents. Landowners and farmers feel that the apparent rigor of State interference is mitigated by the facts of the new situation on the one hand, and by a new hope held out to "the agricultural interests" on the other. A minimum wage of 25s., inclusive of allowances, has lost the terrors it would have had before the war for all farmers save in the more belated southern counties. Selfish employers in such counties as Dorset and Oxford have used the emergency of war to rake in higher profits from bad farming and reduce the low standard of real wages which prevailed before the war. But over the great part of Great Britain wages have already risen for able-bodied labor up to the guaranteed level or over. Twenty-five shillings is barely a true subsistence wage for any working-class family in this

country under existing prices. Expressed in pre-war terms, it amounts to little more than 16s., a manifestly sweating wage. The one advantage it confers upon the laborers in most parts of the country is the obstacle it presents to endeavors to reduce wages later on when prices fall. Again, while the guarantee of minimum prices may well overcome the timidity of the more ignorant farmers, neither the risk to the State nor the aid to the farmers, at any rate until the last period of the guarantee, is likely to be of any moment. Even before the war, the price of wheat was moving upwards towards a figure which does not make the price of 45s., fixed for four years hence, seem very formidable. As for the period of a year or two immediately following peace, the considerations to which Mr. George referred—the impoverishment of so much European land during the war and the shortage of shipping afterwards—must ensure a continuance of prices exceeding the legal minimum. The provision that rent is not to be raised to a sitting tenant is, no doubt, a precaution against the operation of economic forces which must yield the landlords most of the fruits of an improved agriculture. But the barrier can easily be overthrown. A large proportion of farms are on annual tenancy. Are landlords precluded from getting rid of unsatisfactory tenants, or from putting higher rents for new tenants on farms which they can bring evidence to show have long been “under-rented”? It will be hard to enforce this guarantee in the teeth of the land laws of England. The land agents and their legal advisers will riddle it.

Nor would a strict enforcement be just or sound, unless another guarantee, omitted by Mr. George, was appended to his scheme. Minimum prices are guaranteed to farmers for a period of five years. But minimum prices are not guaranteed to consumers. If market prices, as is not likely, stand considerably higher than the minimum, what is to prevent the farmers combining to take excessive profits at the expense of the consuming public? It is true that during the actual emergency of the war the Food Controller may fix selling prices, and, put the consuming public upon rations. But after the war is over what will be the situation? Agriculture will have become habituated to guaranteed prices. These prices will be treated as a vested interest, and any tendency towards a fall of world-prices to a lower level will provoke a powerful demand for a continuance of these guarantees, and their enforcement by protection against cheap foreign food supplies. Is it wonderful, therefore, that the British landlords accept this virtual return to the policy of the Corn Laws? They see the aid it will lend to their new campaign for agricultural protection, urged anew as a measure of national defence. They realize how impossible it will be suddenly to withdraw these artificial supports, and how easily agricultural Socialism will fit in with the elaborate scheme of the new Protectionism. The guaranteed money-wage belongs to the same larger design, not perhaps clearly thought out (for that would be unwise), but implicit in the play of ruling forces. We utterly disbelieve that the people of this country, either in the Army or out of it, want a return to the wage-system on the land. They want possession, not a “guaranteed” wage-service. Mr. George’s plan is not enough; it is a mere outwork of his original structure of land reform. But, taken in connection with his general scheme of government, it is also dangerous. The country is being turned into a close protected State and Empire, conducted by a powerful bureaucracy upon lines which are a combination of Prussianism and Australianism; drawing its autocratic methods from the former,

its policy of concessions and bribes for labor from the latter. And the democratic movement in politics and industry is to be divided and enfeebled by diverting the leaders of the working classes and their followers into an acceptance of this bureaucratic, capitalistic State.

The methods of achieving this end are two, the admission of a small number of selected working-class leaders into the governorship of the State, and the damping down of popular discontent by specious benefits in the way of wages, pensions, and insurances. In this scheme Protection plays an important part. “How can we guarantee you high wages, short hours, and other advantages,” the workers will be asked, “unless you consent to keep out foreigners and their goods from being dumped upon your shores?” To describe Protectionism as the corner-stone of this new State may seem an exaggeration. And yet it is the truth. For a closed commercial state, with hostile trade relations towards foreigners, is part of a dangerous world in which militarism is indispensable. Democracy and internationalism can then and thus alone be stopped. The State Socialism upon which we have embarked, nominally for the duration of the war, has, therefore, this deeper purpose, the firm establishment of a permanently bureaucratic society. At the close of the war this non-representative State will be in actual control of most of the fundamental industries. Commercial and industrial, as well as personal, liberties will have disappeared. The notion that they will be restored, either automatically, or by the mere force of popular demand, may well prove false. Unless the people and their Parliament can get some realizing sense of the risks attending these emergency measures, they will find themselves impotent in the hands of a Government which is certainly not of the people, and very dubiously for the people.

They ought, at any rate, to insist upon the answer to some plain questions. They ought, for instance, to know what security there exists for the increase of the productivity of our agriculture and our mines in face of the constant raiding of their skilled labor by the War Office. The farmer gets something, the laborer a possible something. What do the people get? A coddled but not a renovated and reformed industry. In face of the further rise of prices, what means are to be taken for securing, even to men at 25s., the food and other supplies which that sum will now buy? No such security can be obtained merely by fixing minimum prices and minimum wages in terms of money, having regard to the diminishing supplies of goods and the ever-growing proportion of them demanded for the fighting forces of our country and its Allies. There is as yet no evidence that these questions have been asked, much less answered, by those who are plunging into a morass of price-fixing.

A London Diary.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

THE German withdrawal is, to many observers of the war, one of the cloudiest and least inspiring of its pages. One pores over the map and wonders how it has happened that in face of this dangerous movement, conducted over so wide a salient, our troops have been unable to fall on it with disastrous, if not crushing, effect. What had happened to our aerial observations, usually so good and venturesome, that the Germans have been able to conceal the beginnings of their retreat and to conduct it at so leisurely a pace? What knowledge have we now of the meaning of the whole strategy,

as our soldiers grope their way after the Germans, and the correspondents ask where they are going to stop? Doubtless, we have at last gathered the laurels of last year's victory of the Somme. But with what a faltering hand! And is it possible that the country does not see that the object of war is not to recover positions, but to break the enemy's force? How much nearer are we to that end than in the hour when the Germans left their trenches? If the effect of the German movement is to set back the timetable of our own advance and to rear up fresh obstacles to its success, we are further off than ever.

THE tone of the German Chancellor's speech, no less than its context, shows into what a stage of exasperation the war has passed. When the Asquith Cabinet fell things were being slowly shaped to a kind of amelioration. In spite of the "knock-out" interview, and its call of "Hands off" to America, this tendency persisted. Officially, Germany, as I have said, did very little. But unofficially, she seems to have given Mr. Wilson enough to go upon to induce him to think that America might come in with an offer of a moderate peace (including, of course, a full withdrawal in the West), which Germany might accept nominally at her dictation. The advent of the new Government ruined these hopes. The Moderates in the Asquith Cabinet had nearly all disappeared, and were obviously struck at in the "Times" (at whose signal?) before the actual fall occurred. Mr. George's language promised nothing for peace; and the ambiguities of the Note were unfortunately interpreted so as to yield their maximum sense as a programme of conquest rather than of autonomy and general European settlement. So the German Moderates retired from the field, the Chancellor capitulated to Tirpitz, and the submarine campaign was launched. Now comes the Potsdam election. That indeed may be a portent, should there come an answering call from our democracy.

THAT answer must come through public opinion. Opinion, which is being organized out of existence, must begin to re-form away from the ever-widening circles of official pressure, and apply itself to the problems of peace. A democratic Government would welcome such a movement, and even forward it, for it is obviously moderate and helpful. But our governors are not democratic, and therefore the thinking of the nation must be done without them. What form does it take? More and more, I find, to a debate on the organization of a League of Nations. The tendency has been slow and quite undramatic. Few people knew what a League of Nations meant, or, in view of Germany's behavior, wanted her to belong to it. But now our own folk begin for the first time to see the world putting on its war-paint of famine, plague, and sudden death, and to be rather closely affected by the sight of that black-avised figure. Time, indeed, so to think; time, too, to contrive a way of escape.

A FIRST step is the revival of Parliament. It has been the business of the Northcliffe Press to persuade the people of this country that the House of Commons exists no longer by the simple process of reporting only its scenes and oddities. The retort of the Liberal Press should have been to counter the snippets of the "Daily Mail" with a real effort of description and analysis. For, as it happens, the House is again extremely interesting. Mr. Dillon is a host in himself, one of the greatest private members that Parliament has ever known, and any country but our own would have rung

with echoes of his speech on the Salonikan Expedition. But there are other interesting figures. Mr. Ringle and Mr. Hogge are as good a pair of free lances as have appeared since the days of Sir John Gorst and the elder Churchill. The Government is not persecuted; but it is criticized, forced to explain itself, forced to modify its methods, even forced to walk within the law of the Constitution of which it is a slipshod evasion. But these activities should be made to live in the people's minds, instead of getting dishonorable burial in their cheap newspapers.

GENIUS is the chosen sport of vanity and mediocrity, though it seems a little indecent to make Parliament the scene of it. But it is agreeable to find a relief to Sir Hedworth Meux's caricature of Lord Fisher in the creator's portrayal of himself. The man who could picture Lord Fisher as marooned at a great garden party, and describe his own intervention as the protecting and patronising god, has drawn the Perfect Snob in lines that the great snob artist himself could not have bettered. That is Society. That is our real view of eminence, and a Meux will always be there to express it. That is the circle in which people like Sir Hedworth are preferred to people like Lord Fisher, even in the midst of a war when the presence of the one kind of mentor and the absence of the other may make the difference between failure and success.

MR. EPSTEIN's work at the exhibition in the Leicester Galleries seemed to me to be like nothing that he has produced before, and yet to have all sorts of shy affinities with his earlier achievements. Its power is extraordinary. It takes every kind of manifestation, from the utmost finish, delicacy, and even tenderness, to rough suggestion and brutal allegory. A certain malice is not absent, a suggestion of deformity, or, let us say, of imperfection, which the artist's searching eye may discern in every human face. This disfiguring touch is entirely absent from some of the more decorative baby heads, or from the charming bust of Mr. Davies, the poet, which so well conveys a merry, rustic, faun-like expression, entirely true to its original. But it appears in the wonderful head of Mr. John, with its spiritual grace. Is Mr. John's nose really on one side? It may be; or Mr. Epstein may have seen it so. I am also a little doubtful about his Lord Fisher, perhaps because of the extreme and distracting display of detail, and perhaps, too, because I have never seen Lord Fisher look anything like so forbidding and Sphinx-like as Mr. Epstein makes him appear. His symbolical statuary, again, is striking enough. But his symbolical Venus—compounded of the most hard and literal modern composition, of hints from Egyptian sculpture, and of a throw-back to more primitive art—did not seem to me to convey a poetic suggestion of Venus Genetrix, or to come anywhere near the mystical power of (say) the woman figures in the Medicean Chapel. Was it not even a little finikin and decadent? But Mr. Epstein is a very great artist. He possesses wild force and force in restraint; and he seems to me to be approaching to conceptions of ideal beauty, and to be impatient of modes of expression that prevent him from getting there.

No one who ever saw the late Mr. Richard Lloyd, the Prime Minister's uncle, could forget him. He was for years Mr. George's counsellor and even father, and the correspondence between the two, like their affection, was constant. I do not know whether he was, in fact, the sage that he looked to be and that his simple and noble serenity of demeanor proclaimed him. But

the bond between the two men was as close, I suppose, as ever unites age with youth.

I HAVE received the following sums in aid of my suggestion to send to the Front 100 copies of Mr. Locker-Lampson's anthology of Love Poems for Soldiers:—

	£	s.	d.
Sir John N. Barran, Bart., M.P. ...	2	10	0
"Wayfarer" ...	2	10	0
C. Crichton-Stuart ...	0	2	6
Ethel Downs ...	0	2	6
M. Fletcher ...	0	5	0
Alfred J. King ...	1	10	0
T. Alwyn Lloyd ...	0	2	6
Mrs. McKenna ...	1	0	0
George Metcalfe ...	1	0	0
Miss B. M. Rushton ...	0	5	0
Clement K. Shorter ...	0	10	0

I hope to complete and perhaps add to my proposal next week, and to suggest a plan of transmission.

MR. ZANGWILL is good enough to send me the following verse. He calls it "The Oracle." My readers must apply it as they will:—

THE ORACLE.

Of yore he gave the followers he followed

Answers.

They asked no questions, but they simply swallowed

Answers.

But now with questions surging like a sea,
While rival dooms and eras strive to be,
And all Man's future is dubiety,
Death calls, Grief cries, Faith asks, Hope begs—and he,
ANSWERS!

A WAYFARER.

Life and Letters.

THE TRIUMPH OF HERBERT SPENCER.

THE figure of Herbert Spencer, as his friends and acquaintances knew him, and as he comes before us in his "Autobiography," recalls the typical Englishman in the full flower of that originality and eccentricity the world has always professed to see in him. In Herbert Spencer's personality and character, indeed, the type becomes almost a caricature; it seems difficult to believe that so pure and unmitigated an example of the essential Englishman, in all his bare angularity, could really have existed in the middle of the Victorian period. But he was of very sturdy and independent stock, born in the heart of England, the Anglian Midlands; his father, a man of stern and obstinate temper, gravitated, not by tradition but by temperament, to the Quakers; his mother, herself a gentle and ordinary woman, possessed the singularly persistent hereditary strain of the Huguenots, so further accentuating her son's firm and rebellious nature, and perhaps also conferring on him that natural instinct for clarity and beauty of style which has often marked our English writers of similar strain. Yet Spencer remained absolutely and insularly English; his few journeys abroad were usually unfortunate, and even injurious to his health; he never learnt, or wished to learn, German; he was scarcely more influenced by any other country; he rejected and disliked Comte as much as Kant. He was not even attracted to English thought or English literature, being English by instinct and not by tradition. He was more ostentatious

than Hobbes in his indifference to books or even to formal study, although attracted to Nature, that is to say, to Nature as mechanism. His mind was, indeed, as that of ordinary Englishmen has always been noted to be, indolent, with no wide-ranging power of active interest; he was only interested in what fitted in with his own self-conceived ideas; any kind of discipline imposed from without was impossible to him. Therefore, he was unreceptive; whenever the conversation failed to interest him, whenever people argued against his theories, or brought forward theories of their own, he simply adjusted the special ear-pads he had devised for these occasions; the ordinary Englishman can attain the same end without the use of ear-pads. Spencer was a self-taught amateur; he never had any methodical training, even in science. He was egotistic, self-absorbed, self-confident; at the same time he was fearless and simple-minded, always absolutely sincere, even in social intercourse, where absolute sincerity must so often mean tactlessness. While so unconventional along the lines of his own temperament, he was yet, outside his idiosyncrasies, a complete middle-class Englishman of the strictest sect, much at home in Pall Mall clubs and Bayswater boarding-houses, puritanical, personally austere—always seeking comfort, it is true, though always uncomfortable—very prudish, reverent towards Mrs. Grundy, and constitutionally averse to any open-minded discussion of sexual problems. At all these points he was the naked typical Englishman, carried indeed to so ultimate a point that we may say, to parody a famous phrase, that if Herbert Spencer had never existed it would have been necessary to invent him.

Yet there is more to be said. This fantastic Englishman, in the shape of a meditative recluse of valedudinarian habits, was much more than an illustration on another plane of that English eccentricity which, in an earlier age and in the world of fashion, may amuse us so mightily in the figure of Philip Thicknesse. Spencer lived his own life, and he shut off the world with indifference or contempt. But in the result he was not impoverished by that isolation. His roots went deep down in the soil of his English race; from that rich source he drew direct the nourishment of a mighty brain. So that without immediate contact, with little aid from tradition and with even a sturdy horror of such aid, by the superb force of his natural instinct, he easily took his rightful place as a supreme representative of the English genius. He invented, and elaborated in many large volumes, a new philosophy which, by a large proportion of the ablest minds of his time all over the world, was accepted as a completely satisfying explanation of the universe; he realized the problems and led the controversies of evolution even before Darwin wrote the "Origin of Species," devising for natural selection that term, "Survival of the Fittest," which has become the most famous term ever devised in the realm of science; he wrote a text-book of Psychology, which it is possible to regard as the most important of his own century and the best worth reading in ours, without any training in that science and little knowledge of what others had done; he established on new and firmer ground the foundations of the science of Sociology; he became the chief leader of his time in social morals, the most acute and searching critic of the State, the foremost champion of the rights of the individual and of all the ideals of freedom.

Great as was Spencer's recognized place in the England he represented so perfectly, his influence and authority in the rest of the world were at his death far greater, from France to Russia, from America to Japan. The world seemed to hear with veneration the clear

trumpet tones of this authentic voice of England. In Herbert Spencer England became, for the first time, if not the last, in a true and a spiritual sense, Imperial. Everywhere there were prophets who emulated his voice, legislators who sought to transform his maxims into social action, philosophers who embodied his doctrines; while solitary youths in the Australian bush or the African veldt pored over his "First Principles" to find therein the inspiration of their lives. When he died it was as though a great monarch had passed away. It seemed natural that, as in Italy, legislative chambers should suspend their sittings.

Yet in his own England it appeared to many that it was a discrowned king who had departed. A new generation had arisen, and youth is always impatient with the ideals and beliefs of its fathers. That is not because they are bad, or even because they are good; it is merely because youth craves for ideals and beliefs that are young and fresh like itself. Spencer's had begun to look faded; the very depth and extension of his influence made his essential doctrines seem commonplace, while his non-essential doctrines had often been discredited by later investigation. Moreover, there really was a new social movement in the world which ran directly counter to Spencer's most fundamental doctrines. Spencer had sought to carry, even to an extreme, the expansion of the individual's sphere and the limitations of the State's. The men who were now coming to the front sought to carry to an opposite extreme the expansion of the State's sphere and the limitation of the individual's. Ideologists were in vogue who, having their inspiration from the Germany Spencer had ignored, sought to set up the worship of a State fetish on which he would have poured contempt, while the passion for legislating on all the details of social life became almost a mania. Moreover, the lines of social progress and universal civilization, as Spencer had divined them, were being apparently destroyed; all progress and civilization, as he understood it, lay in the continuous advance of a personal freedom involving the supersession of militarism with its concomitant all-supremacy of the State. He had not indeed foreseen that social aberration by which industrialism itself might be militarized. But it seemed to him that the engines of progressive civilization were being reversed; he felt that he was in the presence of a generation blind and deaf, and he apprehended the approaching cataclysm.

It is at this point that Mr. Hugh Elliot comes before us with his vital and vigorous book on Herbert Spencer.* He has passed through, more thoroughly than most of us, all the phases of feeling which Herbert Spencer evokes. He read the whole of Spencer's works when on active service in South Africa during the Boer War, often with little other baggage than a toothbrush and a volume of "The Principles of Psychology." The "Study of Sociology," for instance, that most trenchant indictment of war and militarism, he read, far from any town, in momentary expectation of attack, and with a revolver at hand. He became a dogmatic Spencerian. But in the years that followed, as a keenly interested observer of social and political movements, he realized that those movements scarcely seemed to be advancing on the lines Spencer had laid down, while, as a trained student of biology, he had to recognize that, in the sphere of science also, Spencer's facts were often wrong and his theories unsound. The disciple grew apathetic. During the Great War of to-day, however, and in the light of that War, he has read Spencer again, and evidently from a higher plane of vision, with a new discrimination,

and a more penetrating insight. He is able to throw aside all that was temporary and unessential in Spencer's doctrines, the limitations of his own time and his own outlook. A Spencerian, Mr. Elliot now recognizes, is one who rejects all authority, even Spencer's, just as Spencer himself rejected all authority. And when that spirit has been attained, and when all deductions have been made, he finds that Herbert Spencer takes his place not only as a great figure in the world's history, but as an Englishman with a special message to Englishmen to-day.

There can be little doubt that, as an unexpected outcome of the Great War, in the finest spirits in England to-day—the men who are shaping not indeed the present, but the future—there burns more than ever before the secret passion of freedom and the ancient English faith in the individual as against the State. It would certainly be a mistake to assume that the Englishman rejects the State. If we wish to see the English view of the State clearly set forth, in contrast to those exotic theories of the worshipful supremacy of the State which have since been imported, we need only turn to one of the most central of Englishmen, the man to whom we owe the chief record of the glories of England, the Odyssey of our race. Richard Hakluyt, writing in 1582 to a friend in Turkey to obtain information as to the best working and dyeing of wools there practised, remarks: "For that of many things that tend to the common benefit of the State, some tend more and some less, I find that no one thing, after one other, is greater than Clothing." In that statement we have the English attitude towards the State set forth in words that are of symbolical even more than of literal truth. The Englishman regards the State as he regards his trousers, as useful indeed, even indispensable, scarcely to be worshipped. For the Englishman, more than any man, is used to making States, cutting them to suit the individual's freedom; he knows too much of States to fall into the barbarian's mistake of supposing that they are sent from Heaven. But this attitude has been the outcome of a political instinct, by no means of a reasoned theory. Now in Herbert Spencer the ancient English instinct became—who knows through what logical germ of his remote French ancestry?—self-conscious and reasoned. The spirit of England, which had chiefly found only practical or imaginative utterance, became intellectually articulate. As will happen to the logically minded, Spencer fell into an extreme which was scarcely English, though as long as he retained mental vitality he corrected earlier extravagances. In his emphasis on the essential things he failed to see that not only was there nothing to lose, but much to be gained, even for the individual's freedom, by socializing the material things of which all have common and equal need. The superfluous intensity of logic to which he stretched his antagonism to the State thus contributed to his own neglect. We overlooked his central vision of the dangers that attend the hypertrophied State with its inevitably militaristic tendencies, and his warnings were unheeded. Now we have reached the abyss that Spencer foresaw.

So it comes about that the Great War has set the final seal on the fame of Herbert Spencer, and henceforth he takes his rightful place in the great English tradition. What was false, imperfect, extravagant, ceases to trouble us, and has fallen away. The essential remains. His authority may be gone, but only because it has been merged in the authority of England. It is the turn of Socialism now to look faded and commonplace in our eyes, however necessary its reactionary influence may have been in the past and however desirable its duly subordinated activity may be in the

* "Herbert Spencer." *Makers of the Nineteenth Century Series.* (Constable.)

future. The ideals that came from Germany are giving place once more to the native ideals of England. To-day, when we are forced to become citizens of the world, it is a happy fact that the man who, above all others, has carried the influence of English thought all over the world was the most essentially English of men; the more English the more universal. The civilizing mission of England lies in the realization of that message which was the outcome of Spencer's deep and clear vision. We may, therefore, welcome the renewed interest in Herbert Spencer as bringing not only inspiration to the new Liberalism, but a breath of invigoration to a wearied world.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

THE OFFICIAL OF CALVARY.

It is usual in theological history to put the Fall before the Redemption, but in their performances last Sunday and Monday the directors of the Stage Society chose to reverse the order. Perhaps their object was to maintain the Society's reputation for originality; or perhaps they thought it a duty, in these ghastly times, to send the audience home cheered by the sensual spell, just as some commanding officers hang alluring pictures round the mess dug-outs "to buck the fellows up." Anyhow, as a sequence to John Masefield's "Good Friday," which represented one scene in the tragedy of man's Redemption, they gave us "La Pomme d'Or," described as "a Ballet of the Italian Renaissance," and representing the fall of a man and woman from innocent piety under the common allurements of "the Flesh." Even the symbolic apple of the Fall in Eden is retained. The young man, who in the first scene is shown as a priest conducting a service at the altar, becomes in the next a kind of pastoral Daphnis, surrounded, as the programme puts it, by "that vision of Paradise which had so absorbed him." The vision of Paradise consists of a considerable number of lightly-clad little girls, who gyrate around him until among them appears the young woman whom he had caught sight of in the church, now dressed as Botticelli's Spring, and playing with a parti-colored apple. After an intricate and entangled dance, representing the temptation of desire, he bites the apple, and the curtain opportunely drops.

If the directors of the Stage Society wished to wipe out all memory of preceding sorrow, and to prove that heroic self-sacrifice and the struggle for righteousness contend in vain against the pleasurable appetites of mankind, they took the way to success. It is an established and rather threadbare doctrine. There is no need to limit its date to the Italian Renaissance, for any date in human history would do as well, and those who can remember the early 'nineties know with what melancholy enticement it was then illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley and his school. No need here to dispute about its truth or its value; we only say that the Stage Society reversed the order of theological history and washed away Redemption by the Fall.

Let us, none the less, return to the tragedy, however depressing the Society may have thought the subject to an audience hurrying away to table or bed. In this Good Friday scene, the dramatist has not introduced the central figure—the "protagonist," as old-fashioned critics would say. Wisely, we think; for if it is true to satiety that King Lear should not be brought on the stage, much more true is it likely to be of Christ, and even the conscious simplicity of Oberammergau hardly admits His appearance without some disillusion. The sentimentalized Christ of tradition and sacred pictures

no longer represents for us the greatness of the historic figure portrayed in the Gospels. And yet it would, perhaps, be impossible, without doing violence to many, truly to represent the Christ who may now be discerned under the various accretions of myth and gentle attempts at His exaltation. So we think the dramatist was wise in limiting his tragedy to a scene among subordinate characters, and to the Pavement or courtyard outside the Roman Governor's residency, without revealing Christ in person, or taking us to the place of His execution. We are left to feel Christ's presence in the religious jealousy of priests, in the clamor of the people for His death, in the brooding sense of horror, darkness, and earthquake pervading all nature at the crime, and in the hopeless pleadings of a woman and a madman who strive to win mercy from the official mind, as women and madmen will.

In trying to realize the historic tragedies of the world, we often desire to know the inmost thoughts of the instruments who brought them about, and even the real feelings of insignificant people who stood around while the tragedy was being actually performed. What were the thoughts of the ecclesiastics who burnt Joan of Arc? What were the feelings of the servant who brought Gordon his last breakfast and saw him killed upon the steps? If we assume the four accounts of Christ's execution to be fairly contemporary and not derived from a common source, the agreement among them is very remarkable. No historical fact of that age could be more strongly supported. And each account reveals a glimpse into the character of some man or woman who was concerned in the tragedy or was standing by. Judas, who hanged himself in horror at his treachery; Peter, who, in spite of a militant temper, lost courage at a crisis; Pilate and his wife; Herod, the typical "independent ruler"; Caiaphas, the typical priest; the Centurion who was overcome by Nature's unheaval; the women who followed the doomed prisoner to the last; and Joseph, who asked leave to give the body decent burial and was granted leave, with a mercy beyond the conception of our Home Office—of all these we are given some account, and they form a surrounding complete and typical for the tragedy of any noble spirit. It is with characters such as these that the dramatist occupies the scene in his "Good Friday."

Take Pilate, who plays the chief part. He is the Government official of all time, if not of all eternity. A well-intentioned official, of course; perhaps rather above the average in benevolence and insight. In horror at the crime of which Pontius Pilate was the legal instrument, medieval Christianity imagined various befitting deaths for such a monster. Precipices from which he hurled himself in distraction are still shown; and desert lakes, the receptacles of his accursed body. Yet if conscience drove to death all Government officials who have acted as Pilate did, we suppose the lakes would not contain the skeletons of their suicide, and precipices would be levelled by their bones. As officials go, Pilate was rather a model than a monster. He put himself to considerable unnecessary trouble (the official's terror) in hope of securing not only justice but mercy. He risked unpopularity not only with the man in the street (the official's standard of behavior and good sense), but with a dominant clerical party, likely to create disturbances in their zeal for established religion. Though he executed one prisoner on the charge of sedition, he released another, convicted of insurrection, rather than refuse their customary right to a rebellious and disaffected tribe. In arriving at a decision upon Christ's case, he showed himself unusually careful and sensitive. He examined the accused personally, told the clergy that

they were apparently mistaken, suggested that this was a fair case for clemency, and when he finally yielded to the malice of theological odium, did his best to wash his hands of the whole affair, and throw the blame upon a ludicrous and incomprehensible patriotism. Yet, because the case was supreme, and he could not rise far above the good official's level, all the water of the world has not cleansed him.

In the play, we see him as he was. Like any orderly official, he protests to his wife that she really must not interrupt cases in Court by sending stories about her dreams. He recognizes something remarkable and sincere in Christ, but what is a perplexed official to do when brought face to face with a person so very different from the man in the street?

"I grant he says wise things.
Too wise by half, and too much wisdom brings
Trouble, I find. It disagrees with men."

"Such men cannot be saved," as he tells his wife after the execution. And again, "Rome is better rid of these rare spirits whom no law controls." Like all officials, he shares with the man in the street a natural dislike for cranks and innovators. "I disagree," he says, "with teachers of new truth. For men like me there is but one religion, which is Rome." About Rome there was something Imperial and permanent, beyond the power of any crank to shake. The Jews bore him to death with their provincial rites and scriptures. Like some English Chief Secretary in our Ireland always brooding over historic wrongs of which he has never heard, Pilate exclaims:—

"Those ancient prophecies
Are drugs to keep crude souls from being wise.
Time and again Rome proves herself your friend;
Then some mad writing brings it to an end.
Time and again, until my heart is sick,
Dead prophets spreading madness in the quick."

From antiquated stuff like this, as from teachers of new truth, Pilate is glad to turn to the discussion of the olive crop, or to points of etiquette which had caused some little trouble between himself and Herod—such points of difference as might arise between a Lieutenant-Governor and a Native Prince in India. He would like to regard the execution as all in the day's work. We feel that in a short time the whole event will be gradually obliterated from his mind, like some big case dimly fading from an Attorney-General's memory, though for others it may have changed the outlook of the world. We feel that Pilate is on the way to become that "Procurateur de Judée" whom, in the famous story, we see travelling to the baths at Baia, gouty and old and vast of bulk:—"Jésus? murmura-t-il, Jésus de Nazareth? Je ne me rappelle pas."

The question for Pilate was the difficult one:—How far is an official bound by the law or by his position to commit what he knows to be a crime? What is his political obligation towards the law which he is pledged to administer, when it stands at variance with his conscience? Few officials, we suppose, would act better or otherwise than Pilate; for the only alternative is resignation, and legal crimes are probably more numerous than resignations on such grounds. It was a difficult situation for the legal mind to be faced with a prisoner who condemned all judgment and legal procedure; or for a comfortable mind when the prisoner taught that where your treasure is, your heart will be also; or for a patriotic mind when informed that the Kingdom of Heaven is within. Pilate is no more to be blamed than is the average judge, the average official, or the man in the street who fails at the moment of some unexpected and perplexing revelation. Such people only take the common, unimaginative way. And

that is why the madman in the drama is right when he sings:—

"No peace for those
Who step beyond the blindness of the pen
To where the clouds unclose.
For them the spitting mob, the cross, the crown of thorns."

Letters to the Editor.

HOW LONG AND WHY?

SIR,—Within the last few months two gleams of light have for a short while lit up the angry sky. Both have been extinguished, and the fog of war seems as impenetrable as before. What has happened? Were these gleams mere *ignes fatui*? The first took shape in the hope of an early negotiated peace. Germany moved first. Her offer of an undefined Conference, couched in victors' language in order to conceal concession in a cloak of magniloquence, was foredoomed to failure. But is it reasonable to regard it as an act of "transparent insincerity"? We know that the need for peace was urgent, and the desire in many quarters quite sincere, though the terms which Germany would have been prepared to accept might well have been impossible. It was a clumsy step, but there is no reason to suppose it was a trick. America, in a position to have better information than we, did not regard it as such. For Mr. Wilson's invitation to state terms, though not the result of collusion with Germany, cannot be conceived as having been made without grounds for believing that Germany meant business. It could not be merely a bow drawn at a venture. Must we not go further, and conclude that, for some time past, certain members of our Government both believed and feared that Germany might put forth peace proposals which had some speciousness as a basis of negotiations, and even might enlist the mediation of America in their favor? On no other supposition is it possible to interpret Mr. George's otherwise uncalled-for interview demanding the "knock-out blow," and warning off the intervention of America. Our policy, the concerted policy of the Allies, was to ward off any such proposal or intervention. This purpose became clearer when Mr. Wilson's definite invitation to state terms was made. We could not say, "No!" as our Jingo Press demanded, to a neutral upon whom we were so dependent for supplies. But we could frame an answer calculated to stop the further course of negotiations by giving the German bitter-enders what they wanted—viz., a weapon to beat down in Germany the rising desires and hopes of a moderate peace. The Allied Note must be considered to have been framed with this object, which it actually achieved. After it was sent, for fear of any moderate interpretation that might be put upon it, Ministers in Petrograd, Paris, and London set themselves to emphasize its more rigorous demands, and the Press of every Allied country rubbed it in. The terms of the Note doubtless did admit of modifications in case of necessity. But, given the psychology of the German situation, the Note was certain to be interpreted in its most menacing and uncompromising significance, so producing its destined end, the damping down of the negotiations and the evocation of desperate measures.

Why did we take this course? The only conceivable answer is that we did not want any negotiations until the projected offensive of this summer had been tried. If we then got a decision, we could impose the victory terms which were the natural interpretation of the Note. If we did not, it would then be open to us, assuming that we felt we must, to resume negotiations on the more moderate interpretation. This explanation is not invalidated, as Mr. Bonar Law suggests, by the speech of the German Chancellor announcing his support of the unlimited submarine policy. The execution of this clumsy *rolle face* merely registered the success of the Allied Note in strengthening the submarinists, annexationists, and other extremists.

This price for "victory terms" is a heavy one for statesmen to pay with others' lives. But they were willing to pay it, and it is fair to add that most of their non-combatant populations probably approved their willingness. For they were convinced that a few more months of supreme effort and supreme sacrifice would secure the victory. This has been the second gleam of hope across the sky. The sanguine statements of new Ministers, the rumored strength of our new forces and munitions, the broken *moral* of the enemy and its growing pressure of starvation, had fed an eager expectation that this third summer would bring the victory. Sir Douglas Haig's famous interview set upon this expectation a seal of official authority, and raised it almost to the level of certainty. The whole of our press, with a few austere exceptions, raised cries of jubilation, and several Ministers joined in the shout of triumph. Suddenly the bubble has broken, the gleam has left the sky,

and we are plunged again in darkness. Lord Derby uttered the first clear note of warning and endurance, calling off the expectation of a summer victory. Then all the press, apparently in response to some definite authoritative appeal, suddenly, and with strange unanimity, dwelt upon the unbroken strength and desperation of the enemy, and hinted, not obscurely, that this summer's million lives would probably not buy the victory, and that the nation must set its teeth, take in its belt, and face the probable extension of the war into the year 1918. No careful student of the press, in the early days of last week, can doubt that this fresh tuning was given by the Government, and that it signifies that they do not believe a decision this summer to be likely. The people must be prepared to fight on through another winter, pay further incalculable costs of human life, plunge into starvation, riot, and possible rebellion the innocent civilian population of the entire Continent, and risk the same fate for our own population.

And all for what? In order to impose a peace which, by its avowed terms, will preclude the possibility of effective guarantees for any lasting settlement. For does any sane man believe that the forcible disruption of Austro-Hungary, the placing of Russia at Constantinople, and the partition of Asiatic Turkey among the Allies, for strategic, political, and economic purposes, and in defiance of all principles of nationality, with the precarious continuance of our existing Alliance for its sole sanction, afford any specious security for a lasting peace of Europe? Is it not agreed that the sole alternative to a return to a "precarious equipoise," competing armaments, and the early prospect of another conflict, is a League of Nations, such as that which President Wilson has formally proposed and to which leading statesmen of both belligerent groups have formally assented? The sole hope for civilization lies in the success of this proposal. But Mr. Wilson, viewing the situation with the cooler, wiser mind of an interested spectator, recognizes that a crushing victory, followed by a dictated peace, must strangle this hope in its cradle. No League of Nations can be erected on the foundation of a dictated peace, containing in its terms the seeds of future strife, corroding hate, territorial spoils, and economic disabilities. All guarantees for such a peace must be futile and short-lived, and a League to furnish them could only be our present Alliance under another name. Its main work and purpose would be to hold down the Central Powers, and so to cripple their economic and commercial life as to prevent their military recuperation. America would enter no such League. That is what the President meant by his condition, "Peace without Victory." A crushing victory is fatal to a League, because it gives the power to dictate terms, and the will to use this power. Yet it is evident that the adhesion of America to the League of Nations is an indispensable condition of its success. Without her adhesion it does not seem possible that a League containing all the great European Powers could come into existence, and a partial League would be nothing but another War Alliance.

We reach, therefore, this conclusion, that the slaughter of the summer, and the probable continuation of the work of destruction into next year, are calculated to secure terms which will render impossible the only project for getting the conditions of a lasting peace. The announcement of this intention makes it impossible for the moderate elements in Germany to express themselves in policy, and by repercussion enables our "fighters to a finish" to declare that Germany has made no tolerable proposal. We cannot, indeed, know for certain whether Germany would be willing openly to admit the complete failure of her aggressive policy and to satisfy the reasonable demands of the Allies for restitution, reparation, and guarantees. For we have taken every possible means not to know.

Ours is a fatally divided and disturbed mind. Admitting that a League of Nations is the only real mode of attaining such security as is attainable, we fail to realize that this admission utterly destroys the case for a crushing victory followed by a dictated peace. The two courses give conflicting guarantees. The victory guarantees are based upon the maintenance for an indefinite future of superior Allied force operating to quell resistance and to stop recuperation. The League guarantees are based upon a settlement, containing no elements of provocation or revenge, and appealing to the common interests of all nations in reducing armaments, establishing equality of rights and opportunities, and settling differences by equitable methods. Why should the Governments of the Allies endeavor to obtain the worse guarantees by an interminable massacre of men and waste of treasure, without any serious attempt to ascertain whether the better guarantees, to which they have assented, are not now within their reach?—Yours, &c.,

J. A. H.

February 28th, 1917.

THE NECESSITY FOR STATE PURCHASE.

SIR,—The article on "The Necessity for State Purchase" is a lucid and weighty contribution to the discussion of a most

difficult yet most urgent problem. With your permission, Sir, I would like to contribute one or two observations: (1) In one of the religious weeklies for last week a writer states that the motive which actuates those supporting State Purchase is the desire to make money out of it—a business concern for the purpose of bringing in revenue. May I venture to say respectfully that, to the best of my belief, that statement is a misrepresentation of facts? I know of no more sincere temperance reformers nor more ardent prohibitionists than many of those who are supporting State Purchase. So far as I am aware, Sir Joseph Compton Rickett is the only one who has advocated purchase for the sake of revenue, and, so far as I am aware, Sir Joseph was only expressing his personal opinion. (2) May I also state that the attitude of the Christian community is not accurately reflected in the religious Press? I think there are reasonable grounds for asserting that the majority of Free Church ministers are in favor of the proposal. It is certain that a vast majority of our leaders have expressed approval of State-purchase. (3) It is essential to point out that prohibition is only a temporary expedient which can be obtained at very great cost, while purchase, which may cost little, if any, more, creates those conditions which are absolutely indispensable for the final solution of the problem.—Yours, &c.,

J. T. RHYS.

10, Finchley Road, N.W. February 26th, 1917.

SIR,—Since you have invited correspondence on the above subject, may I be permitted to express my warm appreciation of the article in your last issue? In all the recent discussions on Prohibition and State Control the sinister power of the trade as a private concern seems very largely lost sight of, and yet it is the private nature of the business that has made legislation almost impossible in lessening the evils that cling to the present system. Where there is such enormous wealth there is an approximate amount of influence, and the difficulty of obtaining any reforms is owing to the enormous Parliamentary and financial power of the brewers and distillers. Everyone who has fought the renewal of licenses for disreputable public-houses knows this too well. The prohibitionists do not seem to realize the enormous gain of the trade being in the hands of the Government. The limitation of manufacture, just announced, is for the time of the war only, and as soon as we are at peace what is there to prevent the trade from recouping itself for past losses? Whereas State Control would immediately sweep away an enormous number of public-houses, completely change, purify, and improve the places where our working classes are in the habit of spending so much of their time—places of which one of their number said to me: "This is no place for a respectable woman." What a confession from one of its supporters! The country is not ready for prohibition; that is as clear as noon-day. This partial prohibition gives little hope of any improvement after the war, and has only been obtained under the agreement that it ends when peace comes. If the State purchased the trade we should have the right to demand from the Government very drastic changes, and when the women have a vote they would see to it that their voices were heard in this matter.—Yours, &c.,

G. KING LEWIS.

Croydon. February 27th, 1917.

SIR,—There are few who fail to recognize the force of your argument that State Purchase alone can clear the way for future reform at any early date. There are, however, more who deprecate the present advocacy of it, lest the demand for War Prohibition should thereby be weakened.

It is hard to discover any real antagonism between the two: War Prohibition itself would surely be more easily accomplished, and much more easily enforced, under State Purchase. But, if it were not so—if for the period of the war we had to trust to the growing restrictions of the Board of Control alone—should we be justified in letting the present unique opportunity of securing the far larger aim go by? We must remember that, beyond the impulse of war urgency, we have to-day the author of State Purchase at the head of a largely Unionist Ministry.

You say truly that in no country in the world has direct State Control barred the way to Prohibition. Speaking of South Carolina, "The Philadelphia Friend," a Quaker journal, wrote in September, 1915, after that State had gone "dry":—"This action was anticipated by both sides, for most of the State has been dry for years; while the Dispensary System, where it prevailed, had largely eliminated private profit, so that the liquor interests were unable to build up a formidable political organization such as dominates the affairs of some of the Northern States in defiance of the rights of the people. The vote for Prohibition was about two and a-half times the 'wet vote.'"

Such was its success that a Commission appointed by Saskatchewan, when confessedly in search for the best route leading up to Prohibition, reported in favor of the same system with improvements. And if sparsely-inhabited States require this elimination of private interests (together with the

reforms which this immediately renders feasible) as the pioneer of Prohibition, how vastly more necessary must it be for our densely populated land!

As one who has supported Prohibition for over fifty years, I may, on the other hand, be allowed to point to Maine as an example to be avoided. This State, after sixty years of State Prohibition, so entirely failed to win its towns—tiny as these are compared with ours—that a town of 6,000 persons was the largest to vote "dry" in 1911. Two or three hundred more votes would have sent the whole State "wet." Any country with large towns is surely bound to wean gradually before it can hope successfully to prohibit; and under State Purchase the weaning process has an immeasurably better chance than under private interests.—Yours, &c.,

THEODORE NEILD.

Leominster. February 28th.

THE SCOTTISH TIMBER SCANDAL.

SIR,—You published in THE NATION of December 2nd last a strong criticism of the excessive prices for certain classes of timber allowed to landowners in Scotland by the Home-Grown Timber Committee, and pointed out that these prices should have been fixed by the Losses Royal Commission rather than by a Committee including, as it does, a considerable land-owning element. The fear, however, was expressed that the mischief had already been done as a high range of prices had been set up in Scotland, and that even the Losses Commission could not upset what this Committee, acting under Government authority, had established. Apparently the Committee has now thought it advisable to unload its responsibilities on the Losses Commission, and I have before me the Press report of what is stated to be the first Scottish application to the Commission regarding timber prices. The application was by the proprietor of the Cawdor Estates in the County of Nairn, the Home-Grown Timber Committee being represented by Mr. John Sutherland. The applicants asked £17,000 for certain of their timber, and Mr. Sutherland is reported to have stated that he thought his Committee was justified in "more or less" agreeing to the price asked. The Chairman of the Commission remarked: "It seems to be a higher price than we have considered before." Mr. Sutherland explained that "both owners of land and timber merchants in Scotland had a much better idea of the value of timber generally than these classes had in England," that "it was found everywhere throughout the North of Scotland that prices were considerably higher than they were in England," and that "it had to be taken into account that his Committee was in constant competition with timber merchants. In several cases it had found merchants prepared to give even more than the Committee. The market had undoubtedly been inflated in consequence" (my italics). The Commission allowed the claim. So the published report reads, significantly bearing out exactly what was foretold in your columns. Why are Highland landowners being so favored? I hope that the action of the Home-Grown Timber Committee in Scotland will receive due attention after the war. I understand that Mr. Sutherland, the "Director" of the Committee, is the same gentleman who (previously the land agent for several Highland proprietors) was appointed a member of the Board of Agriculture and the Commission for Small Holdings in Scotland, and is therefore, "more or less," responsible for the policy which, owing to the heavy compensations paid to landowners, has worked financial wreckage of the Scottish Small Holders Act.—Yours, &c.,

ONE WHO KNOWS.

WAR LOAN DEPRECIATION FUND.

SIR,—There is a proposal in the prospectus of the War Loan recently issued which reads as follows:—

"For the purpose of providing against depreciation in the market prices of the loans the Treasury undertake to set aside, monthly, a sum equal to one-eighth of 1 per cent. of the amount of each loan to form a fund to be used for purchasing stock or bonds of either loan for cancellation whenever the market price falls below the issue price. Whenever the unexpended balance of such fund reaches £10,000,000—the monthly payments will, for the time being, be suspended, but they will be resumed as soon as the unexpended balance falls below £10,000,000."

I believe this proposal to be unsound, to be pernicious, costly to the State, unlikely to effect the object for which it is apparently intended, and that it ought to be repealed. In support of this contention I would beg to refer you to such authorities as Robert Hamilton and Ricardo. Robert Hamilton was a Professor in Aberdeen University, and his "Inquiry" is perhaps the best book on Sinking Funds and any other methods for supporting the price of a stock or loan to which reference can be made.

He states, with regard to the proposal of a fund for the purpose of supporting the price of stock: "We apprehend

that it is incapable of producing any such effect. The price of stock, like that of most commodities, depends upon the proportion of supply and demand. Whatever sums are brought into the Money Market and applied by the Commissioners for the purchase of stock, equal sums are withdrawn from the Money Market by the additional loans required to replace what is invested in the hands of the Commissioners. . . . The purchases made by the Commissioners no doubt support the funds at a higher rate than they would stand if there were no such purchases in the field and the loan for the year the same, and this advance takes place at a time when a high price is disadvantageous to the public. But the additional loan which the sinking fund requires must have as great an effect in depressing the funds, and that depreciation takes place at a time when a low price is disadvantageous to the public."

The only real sinking fund, or any fund which can permanently affect the price of the stock, is an excess of revenue above expenditure, and all schemes, he further states, "unless so far as they are founded upon this principle are illusory."

During the debate in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 20th inst., Mr. Baldwin, in reply to my request for him to demonstrate how the Treasury proposal will prove practicable and successful, said that he thought he could prove it. Time will show, but meanwhile the country is saddled with an additional, and, as I venture to state, wholly unnecessary, charge. If the total loan with conversions amounts to, say, £2,000,000,000, that may entail a fund of £30,000,000, which, of course, is a charge upon the State.

In Pitt's time, when Hamilton was showing up the pernicious and unsound character of such-like proposals, a movement was started, and was eventually successful in abolishing similar arrangements. It is to be hoped that history will repeat itself and that a similar fate awaits the proposal of the present Government.—Yours, &c.,

D. M. MASON.

February 26th, 1917.

Poetry.

TWO POEMS BY SOLDIERS.

THE LAST POST.

(June, 1916.)

THE bugler sent a call of high romance—
Lights out! Lights out!—to the deserted square:
On the thin brazen notes he threw a prayer.
God, if it's *this* for me next time in France
Spare me the phantom bugle as I lie
Dead in the gas and smoke and roar of guns,
Dead in a row with the other shattered ones,
Lying so stiff and still under the sky—
Jolly young Fusiliers, too good to die.

The music ceased, and the red sunset flare
Was blood about his head as he stood there.

ROBERT GRAVES.

DIED OF WOUNDS.

HIS wet, white face and miserable eyes
Brought nurses to him more than groans and sighs;
But hoarse and low and rapid rose and fell
His troubled voice; he did the business well.

The Ward grew dark; but he was still complaining
And calling out for "Dickie." "Curse the Wood!"
"It's time to go. O God, and what's the good?"
We'll never take it, and it's always raining."

I wondered where he'd been, then heard him shout,
"They snipe like hell! O Dickie, don't go out!"
I fell asleep. Next morning he was dead,
And a Slight Wound lay smiling on his bed.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

The World of Books.

THE "NATION" OFFICE, THURSDAY NIGHT.

THE following is our weekly selection of books which we commend to the notice of our readers:—

- "The Practical Book of Architecture." By C. M. Price. (Lippincott. 25s. net.)
 "A Great Emperor: Charles V." By Christopher Hare. (Stanley Paul. 12s. 6d. net.)
 "Chatham's Colonial Policy." By K. Hotblack. (Routledge. 6s. net.)
 "The Land and the Empire." By Christopher Turnor. (Murray. 3s. 6d. net.)
 "House-Mates." By J. D. Beresford. (Cassell. 6s.)
 "Sonia: Between Two Worlds." By Stephen McKenna. (Methuen. 6s. net.)
 "De Pascal à Chateaubriand: Les Défenseurs du Christianisme." Par Albert Monod. (Paris: Alcan. 7fr. 50.)

THERE is no doubt that the output of new books, already very much diminished, will fall off still more in the near future. "When no new book comes out I read an old one," will become the contemporary version of Rogers's famous saying. This is not a wholly unmixed evil. The perils of the darkened streets have done something to help the reading habit, and there has been a notable increase in the number of those who pass their evenings quietly by the fire, reading some old book that would most likely have been neglected under other circumstances. Yes, but what old book? That, of course, depends on the reader. I have heard of a man whose interest in the Near East has led him back to Gibbon, and of others who are following the stages of Napoleon's campaigns. For my own part, I prefer to make fresh discoveries among old books. They should belong to the by-paths of literature, but not too far away from the beaten track, and they are all the more attractive if they contain some good gossip. These qualities are to be found in the "Letters" of Lady Louisa Stuart.

My interest in Lady Louisa Stuart was first roused by one of Mr. John Buchan's essays, contributed, I believe, to "Blackwood's Magazine." Mr. Buchan began by admitting that to most people Lady Louisa Stuart is only a name, and he went on to describe her as one of the best of English letter-writers. Upon this I took Captain Cuttle's advice, and made a note of it, but with no result until quite recently, when a couple of lucky visits to a second-hand book-shop provided me with Mr. James Home's edition of the "Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart to Miss Louisa Clinton," the same editor's selections from Lady Louisa's manuscripts, and Mrs. Clark's three volumes of her correspondence. I can heartily recommend these volumes to other readers, especially if they share Mr. Balfour's literary taste, and have a preference for "not literature merely, but that literature in particular which serves the great cause of cheering up." For Lady Louisa Stuart's letters are full of pleasant and cheerful gossip by a woman who met people well worth gossiping about, frank estimates of men and of books, and entertaining glimpses of bygone customs, fashions, and oddities. They are, in fact, what Lady Louisa herself said of the letters of her grandmother, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "letters—not dissertations, nor sentimental effusions, nor strings of witticisms; but real letters such as any person of plain sense would be glad to receive."

LADY LOUISA STUART belongs to that engaging class of writers—Maria Holroyd, the Miss Berrys, and Caroline Fox are other examples—who saw a good deal of literary society and have recorded their impressions without any thought that they were writing for posterity. She was, as I have said, the grand-daughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Her father was the Earl of Bute, the Prime Minister of whom Macaulay tells us that though he could not spell, "he might fairly be called a man of cultivated mind." His daughter was something more. Like her famous grandmother, she was "a rake at reading." Scott pronounced her to be "the best critic he knew." He asked her opinion of his poems before he published them, and told her that he did not know a person who had half her taste or talent, and that she possessed "an uncommon portion of that rare quality called genius." Not

the least of her advantages as a letter-writer was the length of her life. Born in 1757 (the year of Quiberon Bay), she lived until 1851 (the year of the Great Exhibition), so that it would have been possible for her to have witnessed the first performance of Goldsmith's "Good-natured Man" and to have been present at the funeral of Wordsworth.

Books and politics are the topics that come oftenest into her letters. Sometimes she combines both, as when she writes:—

"Guess the book I have been studying? Cobbett's 'Grammar.' The viper has infused into it so much poison that one should not care to put it into the hands of any person of low degree, lest such a person should be taught to cut one's throat for one's pains; yet, take it merely as a grammar, it is the best I ever saw in my life, and the most useful for teaching one either to read or to write. People who suppose they do the latter more than commonly well, would be surprised if they knew how much bad English the desire of using fine language betrayed them into."

Of Brougham she says: "It is a great misfortune to be a puppy born and bred, or, rather, to be born a puppy and bred a reviewer." And of Brougham's client, Queen Caroline, she tells with glee:—

"Somebody told a story here of a Quaker who was coming down to Hammersmith in the stage-coach in company with two or three women who talked violently in her favor. He said nothing—they attacked him for his opinion: 'Why, friend, if thou wilt know it, I think she is good enough for thy King but not good enough for thy Queen'; the true state of the case."

IN spite of her learning and her interest in letters, Lady Louisa was nothing of a bluestocking. She gives an amusing description of one of Mrs. Montagu's solemn assemblies of "the blues":—

"Everything in the house, as if under a spell, was sure to form itself into a circle or a semicircle. I once saw this produce a ludicrous scene. Mrs. Montagu having invited us to a very early party, we went at the hour appointed and took our station in a vast half-moon, consisting of about twenty or twenty-five women, where I was placed between two grave faces unknown to me, hiding yawns with my fan, and wondering at the unwonted seclusion of the superior sex. At length a door opened behind us, and a body of eminent personages—the Chancellor, I think, and a bishop or two among them—filed in from the dining-room. They looked wistfully over our shoulders at a good fire, which the barrier we presented left them no means of approaching; then, drawing chairs from the wall, seated themselves around us in an outer crescent, silent and solemn as our own. . . . We must all have died at our posts if one lady had not been luckily called away, whose exit made a gap for the wise men to enter and take possession of the fire-place."

Though not a bluestocking, she read almost every book that came out. Scott was, of course, her favorite. She disliked Byron, and she wrote of "Lalla Rookh": "I feel as if I were eating raspberry and apricot jam till they cloyed and sickened me." She was prompt to see Jane Austen's merit, and she relaxed her hostility to Americans so far as to "like very well" Washington Irving's "Sketch Book."—"I do not think it the work of a man of genius, but it shows a mind imbued with the spirit of good (and old) English literature, and that is a great deal with me."

UNFORCED liveliness, with now and then a touch of sharpness, may be found in all of Lady Louisa Stuart's letters. Her sharpness is usually turned to her own sex. She says of one acquaintance that "the bloom of her ugliness was wearing off," and she defines "a good sort of woman" as "a good woman of the bad sort." One is reminded that the more things change, the more they remain the same, when we find her blaming the fashions of 1798 for their indecency:—

"The transparent dresses that leave you certain there is no chemise beneath! The figures one meets walking in the streets with footmen behind them are exactly what Crébillon would have painted on a sofa to receive a lover. And in a high wind! . . . Don't imagine me an old maid growling at the young people, for some of the most remarkable statues in web drapery are very fully my contemporaries at least."

Even with the present difficulties in the way of producing new books, it ought to be worth a publisher's while to issue a selection in one volume from the half-dozen that contain Lady Louisa Stuart's correspondence.

PENGUIN.

Reviews.

THE ALTERNATIVE TO MITTELEUROPA.

"A League of Nations." By H. N. BRAILSFORD. (Headley. 5s. net.)

MR. BRAILSFORD'S book is, with the exception of Friedrich Naumann's "Mitteleuropa," the most considerable and sustained as well as the most attractive and stimulating intellectual effort which direct political reflection on the war has produced. The two works are, in a sense, complementary to each other, for they start from the same point of view. Both see that a world so profoundly disturbed, and so visibly threatened with destruction in the future, must provide for itself a fresh political structure; both insist that its foundations shall be laid during and not after the war. And both find that the foundations of this renovated society cannot rest on nationality alone. They look, therefore, to a form of internationalism, a limitation of State sovereignty achieved by way of a confederation or a union of States. It is in the character of the relationship they suggest, and of the moral aim behind it, that the differences of the two thinkers appear. They are profound. The after-war Europe which Herr Naumann contemplates is a Europe in the hands of its General Staffs and Admiralties, and his contribution to it is confessedly an effort in what he calls the "trench-making policy." He would so construct, fortify, and replenish his new Germanic holding that behind its two long northern and southern "ditches" may dwell a people able to live, expand, intensify their organization, and, therefore, defy the rest of the world. These are the limits of his civilizing conception, ingeniously and ably worked out as it is. Mr. Brailsford's countering proposition is a wider one. The estate it would cultivate is that of Europe, and the transformation it would effect—"from force to conference, from armaments to reason, from monopoly to free intercourse, from rival alliances to a society of nations, from the sovereign State to the federal league, from exclusive nationalism to international solidarity"—concerns the whole body of civilization. Between the two society must choose, for there is no third course. The coarser and more faithless political thinking in both camps is ranged round the school of the two ditches. But, in essence, the finer mind of the Entente holds the key to the world's hopes. The "League of Nations" is the answer to "Mitteleuropa," and the idea cannot be better studied than under Mr. Brailsford's searchlight of frank but hopeful criticism.

It is the merit of Mr. Brailsford's book that it seeks to place the League of Nations on the only ground on which it can stand—as the one positive and substantial contribution to the well-being of the world which can issue from the war. In other words, distinct advantages must attach to the Power which comes into the League, and equally marked disadvantages must fall on the Power which stands out of it or abandons its membership. Mr. Brailsford does, in effect, propose to make it difficult to keep out. He would give the League a "spiritual home" in the imaginations of the peoples, and he would place its centre geographically in some such historic capital as Constantinople. But his real proposition is to make it an almost indispensable source of benefits. It would distribute its "premiums" to its subscribers, in the shape of a share in the stocks of raw materials which it would control. It would open the home markets of each Power to its fellow-members, secure their trade in undeveloped regions of the earth, and give them equal opportunities in the non-autonomous colonies. These favors would, of course, carry corresponding disabilities in the event of withdrawal. And these, again, would give place to actual penalties—such as the extreme use of sea-power—against the nation that refused the League's invitation to refer its dispute to arbitral or conciliatory justice. He, rightly we think, puts the application of force well in the background of the polity of the League. We do not want to set up one kind of militarism in order to cure another, and a world which respected nationality and acknowledged commercial freedom would, as he suggests, be able to get on with the minimum of coercive machinery. He relies, therefore, in the main, on the power of expulsion, and the loss of privileges that this exile would entail.

Here, no doubt, the League meets its initial difficulty. How is it to deal with the idea of sovereignty, and how can it modify—to begin with, it cannot supersede—the system of alliances within the States? Mr. Brailsford's answer is both practical and ideal. He would attach two general conditions to membership of the League. He would call on its constituents to give Home Rule and religious and cultural rights to its dependent nationalities, and to sign a charter of commercial freedom. Alliances he would not abandon altogether, and here he is obviously right. It would not be in human nature to ask France to relinquish her tie with us or us to abandon France, or in the event of a French breach of the Law of Nations, to require us to act with Germany against her, or even to call in the smaller nations to join in war against a great (and neighboring and warlike) Power. All that we can do is to allow the present alliances to continue, to look to their gradually merging in the common life of the League, and to ask at least that Allies shall not support each other against it.

The problem, therefore, is to devise an organ of internationalism which will not be so weak as to drive the nations, by virtue of its sheer negativeness, back on to the old militarist alliances, or so forceful as to recreate the militarism it would supersede. But it is clear that there must be one great impulse of faith and hope behind it. The real foundation of the League must rest on a community of effort and sacrifice. All the Powers would be required to put something into the common stock. Germany, with the other land Empires and Powers, might well submit to a reduction of the period of military training (say, to six months); we could agree to limit the full use of sea-power in private wars, and to use it up to the unlimited right of blockade and embargo only in the punitive or preventive wars of the League. We are not convinced that Mr. Brailsford has worked down to an equal scale of sacrifice for Britain and Germany, but he has probably in mind the fact that Germany, under the peace, will have yielded the whole ground of aggressive adventure in Europe, and that under the rule of the League she must always reckon on a recourse to full British sea-power to defeat an attempt to regain it. But, indeed, the moral of the book is missed if we fail to realize that the author links it on to the idea of a peace of general contentment, brought about by a combined effort of goodwill on the part of all the belligerents. And that, again, vetoes a war of desolation, and a superimposed peace, resting on the subordination and impoverishment of one side or the other. Mr. Brailsford asks what kind of peace thus secured would be durable, and for what period. We see no answer to his question. The war, indeed, may be so fought (Germany has so fought it) that its "concerted rush to ruin and death" may carry the nations beyond the power both of appeasement and of recuperation. It is the business of statesmanship to see that this does not happen. Mr. Brailsford takes, we think, too neutral a view of Germany's share in the immense offence of precipitating and preparing such an event. But we may accept his refusal to regard it as a working of destructive forces only. The promoting energies were not all criminal (for they included half-a-dozen national demands for the right to live and grow). But they were certainly incapable of satisfaction by the way of force. If, therefore, we look to force, and force only, as the midwife of all these ambitions, we shall fail. Similarly, in the abandonment of force and in the winning of Germany's consent to substitute for it a plan of continuous international organization we at once gain our stated objects in the war, and defeat those of an egoistic, self-centred Teutonism. We may let those objects disappear in the storm of passion generated by the conflict. That would be a great political error. But if we overlay the peace with a penal scheme of war after the war, we repeat the original crime of Germany with a deliberation that would place our guilt even above hers.

Mr. Brailsford's scheme of organization for a League of Nations is interesting. He suggests four bodies—an Executive, with real freedom of action, sitting as a Cabinet of the Cabinets of the Great Powers in a chosen and fixed capital, and possessing a powerful suite of military, naval, legal, and commercial attachés; a Standing Council of Inquiry and Conciliation, on which the smaller Powers would be represented, acting

as a kind of watching authority for civilized interests; an independent, judicial body; and at the long last a true international Parliament, in itself the child of a "consultative Council," chosen, in proportion, from the various parties of the national Parliaments. In other words, he proposes at first to make the League of Nations an organ of Governments, and to end by setting it up as a representation of the peoples. It is quite possible that this conservative order may be reversed. A war compassing the general ruin may well have a dramatic exit, and a League of Peace be established as the act of revolutionary Governments in every capital in Europe.

We can do no justice at all to the critical value of Mr. Brailsford's work, or to the subtle and suggestive play of his intellect, working in material as familiar to him as to any contemporary student of foreign policy. It opens up the whole subject, and states fairly the general ground of objection. Progressive opinion should at once set to work on it, and organize its study through every centre of free thought that the war has left standing—P.S.A.'s, educational groups, and political circles and clubs.

NEW LIGHT ON SHELLEY.

"Shelley in England: New Facts and Letters from the Shelley-Whitton Papers." By ROGER INGPEN. (Kegan Paul. 15s. net.)

SHELLEY is one of the most difficult of men of genius to portray. It is easy enough to attack him or defend him—to damn him as an infidel or to praise him because he made Harriet Westbrook so miserable that she threw herself into the Serpentine. But this is an entirely different thing from recapturing the likeness of the man from the nine hundred and ninety-nine anecdotes that are told of him. These for the most part leave him with an air of absurdity. In his habit of ignoring facts he appeals again and again to one's sense of the comic, like a drunken man who fails to see the kerb or who walks into a wall. He was indeed drunken with doctrine. He lived almost as much from doctrine as from passion. He pursued theories as a child chases butterflies. There is a story told of his Oxford days which shows how eccentrically his theories converted themselves into conduct. Having been reading Plato with Hogg, and having soaked himself in the theory of pre-existence and reminiscence, he was walking on Magdalen Bridge when he met a woman with a child in her arms. He at once seized the child, while its mother, thinking he was about to throw it into the river, clung on to it by the clothes. "Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, madam?" he asked, in a piercing voice and with a wistful look. She made no answer, but on Shelley repeating the question, she said, "He cannot speak." "But surely," exclaimed Shelley, "he can if he will, for he is only a few weeks old! He may fancy perhaps that he cannot, but it is only a silly whim; he cannot have forgotten entirely the use of speech in so short a time; the thing is absolutely impossible." The woman, obviously taking him for a lunatic, replied mildly: "It is not for me to dispute with you gentlemen, but I can safely declare that I never heard him speak, nor any child, indeed, of his age." Shelley walked away with his friend, observing, with a deep sigh: "How provokingly close are these new-born babes!" One can, no doubt, discover similar anecdotes in the lives of other men of genius and of men who only thought they had genius. But in such cases one is usually quite clear that the action was a jest or a piece of attitudinizing, or that the person who performed it was, as the vulgar say, "a little above himself." In any case it almost invariably appears as an abnormal incident in the life of a normal man. Shelley's life, on the other hand, is largely a concentration of abnormal incidents. He was habitually "a bit above himself." No doubt, in the above incident, he was consciously behaving comically. But many of his serious actions were quite as comically extraordinary.

Godwin is related to have said that "Shelley was so beautiful, it was a pity he was so wicked." We doubt if there is a single literate person in the world to-day who would apply the word "wicked" to Shelley. It is said that Browning, who had begun

as such an ardent worshipper, never felt the same regard for Shelley after reading the full story of his desertion of Harriet Westbrook and her suicide. But Browning did not know the full story. No one of us knows the full story. On the face of it, it looks a peculiarly atrocious thing to desert one's wife at a time when she is about to become a mother. It seems ungenerous, again, when one has an income of £1,000 a year to make an annual allowance of only £200 to a deserted wife and her two children.

Shelley, however, had not married Harriet for love. A nineteen-year-old boy, he had run away with a seventeen-year-old girl in order to save her from the imagined tyranny of her father. At the end of three years, it seems, Harriet had lost interest in him. Besides this, she had an intolerable elder sister whom Shelley hated. Harriet's sister, it is suggested, influenced her in the direction of bonnet-shops instead of supporting Shelley's exhortations to her that she should cultivate her mind. "Harriet," says Mr. Ingpen, "foolishly allowed herself to be influenced by her sister, under whose advice she probably acted when, some months earlier, she prevailed upon Shelley to provide her with a carriage, silver plate, and expensive clothes." We cannot help sympathizing a little with Harriet. At the same time, she was making a breach with Shelley inevitable. She wanted him to remain her husband and to pay for her bonnets, but she did not want even to pretend to "live up to him" any longer. As Mr. Ingpen says, "it was love, not matrimony," for which Shelley yearned. "Marriage," Shelley had once written, echoing Godwin, "is hateful, detestable. A kind of ineffable, sickening disgust seizes my mind when I think of this most despotic, most unrequited fetter which prejudice has forged to confine its energies." Having lived for years in a theory of "anti-matrimonialism," he now saw himself doomed to one of those conventional marriages which had always seemed to him a denial of the holy spirit of love. This, too, at a time when he had found in Mary Godwin a woman belonging to the same intellectual and spiritual race as himself—a woman whom he loved, as the great lovers in all the centuries have loved. Shelley himself expressed the situation in a few characteristic words to Thomas Love Peacock. "Everyone who knows me," he said, "must know that the partner of my life should be one who can feel poetry and understand philosophy. Harriet is a noble animal, but she can do neither." "It always appeared to me," said Peacock, "that you were very fond of Harriet." Shelley replied: "But you did not know how I hated her sister." And so Harriet's marriage-lines were torn up, as people say nowadays, like a scrap of paper. That Shelley did not feel he had done anything inconsiderate is shown by the fact that, within three weeks of his elopement with Mary Godwin, he was writing to Harriet, describing the scenery through which Mary and he had travelled, and urging her to come and live near them in Switzerland. "I write," his letter runs—

"to urge you to come to Switzerland, where you will at least find one firm and constant friend, to whom your interests will be always dear—by whom your feelings will never willfully be injured. From none can you expect this but me—all else are unfeeling, or selfish, or have beloved friends of their own, as Mrs. B[oinville], to whom their attention and affection is confined."

He signed this letter (the Ianthe whom he speaks of was his daughter):—

"With love to my sweet little Ianthe, ever most affectionately yours, S."

This letter, if it had been written by an amorist, would seem either base or priggish. Coming from Shelley, it is a miracle of what can only be called innocence.

The most interesting of the "new facts and letters" in Mr. Ingpen's book relate to Shelley's expulsion from Oxford and his runaway match with Harriet, and to his father's attitude on both these occasions. Shelley's father, backed by the family solicitor, cuts a commonplace figure in the story. He is simply the conventional grieved parent. He made no effort to understand his son. The most he did was to try to save his respectability. He objected to Shelley's studying for the Bar, but was anxious to make him a member of Parliament; and Shelley and he dined with the Duke of Norfolk to discuss the matter, the result being that the younger man was highly indignant "at what he considered an

Austin

DO YOU WANT A LORRY?

—We can give early delivery of one of the famous AUSTIN 2-3 tonners
It embodies 35 war-service improvements

Full specification sent at request—

Chassis - - £695

Write to-day to

The Austin Motor Co Ltd.

Head Office and Works

Northfield Birmingham

London - Paris - Manchester - Norwich



"PERFECTOS Nº 2"

VIRGINIA CIGARETTES

(HAND MADE)

High-Class Cigarettes of superb delicacy, the result of a matchless blend of the finest Virginia Tobacco.

10 for 7½d. 20 for 1/3
50 for 3/- 100 for 5/6

"PERFECTOS FINOS" are larger Cigarettes of the same quality.

For distribution to Wounded British Soldiers and Sailors in Military Hospitals at Home and for the Front at Duty Free Prices. Terms on application to

JOHN PLAYER & SONS, NOTTINGHAM

SOLE Branch of the Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain & Ireland), Ltd.

Prudential Assurance Company, Ltd.

HOLBORN BARS, LONDON.

Invested Funds - - - - £97,000,000

Claims Paid - - - - £135,000,000

**BIBLES AND
PRAYER BOOKS**

For PRIZES, &c.

**The London Bible Warehouse,
22, Paternoster Row, E.C.,**

Have the Largest and best Selection in London. We specialise in Bibles, Prayer Books, Church Services, etc., for Clergy, Congregation, and the Children.

Please write, phone, or call. List sent post free
TELEPHONE: CENTRAL 370.

A BRITISH CHARITY THAT NEEDS HELP

The National Refuges and Training Ships 'Arethusa' and 'Chichester'

2,300 BOYS HAVE JOINED THE ROYAL NAVY. OLD BOYS ARE SERVING IN 100 BRITISH REGIMENTS

Funds are Urgently Needed

THE WAR HAS MEANT TO US GREATLY INCREASED EXPENSES OWING TO RISE IN PRICES OF FOOD AND MATERIALS

PATRONS: THE KING AND QUEEN.
CHAIRMAN AND TREASURER: W. E. HUBBARD, Esq.,
17, ST. HELEN'S PLACE, LONDON, E.C.

JOINT SECRETARIES: H. BRISTOW WALLEN, H. G. COPELAND.
LONDON OFFICES: 164, SHAFTESBURY AVENUE, LONDON, W.C.

TRIUMPH

Our whole productions are requisitioned by the British War Office and the War Offices of our Allies



TRIUMPH CYCLE Co. Ltd., COVENTRY



**SOUTH AMERICA
WEST INDIES
SPAIN. PORTUGAL
PANAMA BERMUDA CENTRAL
AMERICA GIBRALTAR MOROCCO
ATLANTIC ISLANDS EGYPT
STRAITS CHINA JAPAN &
THE ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET
18 MOORGATE STREET LONDON EC**

effort to shackle his mind, and introduce him into life as a mere follower of the Duke." How unpromising as a party politician Shelley was, may be gathered from the fact that in 1811, the same year in which he dined with the Duke, he not only wrote a satire on the Regent *à propos* of a Carlton-House fête, but "amused himself with throwing copies into the carriages of persons going to Carlton House after the fête." Shelley's methods of propaganda were on other occasions also more eccentric than is usual with followers of Dukes. His journey to Dublin to preach Catholic Emancipation and repeal of the Union was the beginning of a brief but extraordinary period of propaganda by pamphlet. Having written a fivepenny pamphlet, "An Address to the Irish People," he stood in the balcony of his lodgings in Lower Sackville Street, and threw copies to the passers-by. "I stand," he wrote at the time, "at the balcony of our window, and watch till I see a man who looks likely; I throw a book to him." Harriet, it is to be feared, saw only the comic side of the adventure. Writing to Elizabeth Hitchener—"The Brown Demon," as Shelley called her when he came to hate her—she said:—

"I'm sure you would laugh were you to see us give the pamphlets. We throw them out of the window, and give them to men that we pass in the streets. For myself, I am ready to die of laughter when it is done, and Percy looks so grave. Yesterday he put one into a woman's hood and cloak. She knew nothing of it, and we passed her. I could hardly get on: my muscles were so irritated."

Shelley, none the less, was in regard to Ireland a wiser politician than the politicians, and he was indulging in no turgid or fanciful prose in his "Address" when he described the Act of Union as "the most successful engine that England ever wielded over the misery of fallen Ireland." Godwin, with whom Shelley had been corresponding for some time, now became alarmed at his disciple's reckless daring. "Shelley, you are preparing a scene of blood!" he wrote to him in his anxiety. It is evidence of the extent of Godwin's influence over Shelley that the latter withdrew his Irish publications and returned to England, having spent about six weeks on his mission to the Irish people.

Mr. Ingpen has really written a new biography of Shelley, rather than a compilation of new material. The new documents incorporated in the book were discovered by the successors to Mr. William Whitton, the Shelleys' family solicitor, but they can hardly be said to add much to our knowledge of the facts about Shelley. They prove, however, that his marriage to Harriet Westbrook took place in a Presbyterian Church in Edinburgh, and that, at a later period, he was twice arrested for debt. Mr. Ingpen holds that they also prove that Shelley "appeared on the boards of the Windsor Theatre as an actor in Shakespearean drama." But we have only William Whitton, the solicitor's word for this, and it is clear that he had been at no pains to investigate the matter. "It was mentioned to me yesterday," he wrote to Shelley's father in November, 1815, "that Mr. P. B. Shelley was exhibiting himself on the Windsor Stage in the character of Shakespeare's plays, under the figured name of Cooks." "The character of Shakespeare's plays" sounds oddly, as though Whitton did not know what he was talking about, unless he was referring to allegorical "tableaux vivants" of some sort. Certainly, so vague a rumor as this—the sort of rumor that would naturally arise in regard to a young man who was supposed to have gone to the bad—is no trustworthy evidence that Shelley was ever "an actor in Shakespearean drama." At the same time, Mr. Ingpen deserves enthusiastic praise for the untiring pursuit of facts which has enabled him to add an indispensable book to the Shelley library. We wish that, as he has to some extent followed the events of Shelley's life until the end, he had filled in the details of the life abroad as well as the life in England. His book is an absorbing biography, but it remains of set purpose a biography with gaps. He writes, it should be added, in the spirit of a collector of facts rather than of a psychologist. One has to create one's own portrait of Shelley out of the facts he has brought together.

One is amazed to find so devoted a student of Shelley—a student to whom every lover of literature is indebted for his edition of Shelley's letters as well as for the present book—referring to Shelley again and again as "Bysshe." His family, it must be admitted, called him "Bysshe." But to us it seems that never was a more inappropriate name given to a poet who brought down music from heaven. At the

same time, as we read his biography over again, we feel that it is possible that the two names do somehow express two incongruous aspects of the man. In his life he was, to a great extent, Bysshe; in his poetry he was Shelley. Shelley wrote "The Skylark" and "Pan" and "The West Wind." It was Bysshe who imagined that a fat old woman in a train had infected him with incurable elephantiasis. Mr. Ingpen quotes Peacock's account of this characteristic illusion:—

"He was continually on the watch for its symptoms; his legs were to swell to the size of an elephant's, and his skin, was to be crumpled over like goose-skin. He would draw the skin of his own hands, arms, and neck, very tight, and, if he discovered any deviation from smoothness, he would seize the person next to him and endeavor, by a corresponding pressure, to see if any corresponding deviation existed. He often startled young ladies in an evening party by this singular process, which was as instantaneous as a flash of lightning."

Mr. Ingpen has wisely omitted nothing about Bysshe, however ludicrous. After reading a biography so unsparing in tragi-comic narrative, however, one has to read "Prometheus" again in order to recall that divine song of a freed spirit, the incarnation of which we call Shelley.

SOME FAITHFUL FAILURES.

"The Strength of the Strong." By JACK LONDON. (Mills & Boon. 6s.)

"Ruggles of Red Gap." By HARRY LEON WILSON. (Lane. 6s.)

"This Way Out." By Mrs. HENRY DUDENEY. (Methuen. 6s. net.)

"Marshdikes." By HELEN ASHTON. (Fisher Unwin. 6s.)

JACK LONDON is dead, and the world is the poorer for an honest and sturdy writer of adventure stories. He used, we suppose, to be an argument exploited by a certain school of moderns who think that the less style, training, and experience that go to your work, the better that work will be. Here was a novelist, they say, who had no "art-struck" (as Mr. Shaw would say) nonsense about him, whose virility and fire despised the cindered path, who was not only rapturously enjoyed by millions of readers, but, by virtue of his freshness, thoroughly deserved to be. And there is no doubt that Jack London, in spite of his sentimentalities and extravagances, had a taking way with him. He never descended to the mere mechanics and routine of fiction, and his almost Elizabethan heartiness, energy, and naïveté, made him as readable a novelist as, with the exception of O. Henry and Mrs. Wharton, has come out of America in this decade. But, of course, he failed to climb quite out of sight of the average, because of his lack of skill and training. He was always an amateur—sometimes quite a brilliant one—but never an artist. He did not know how to direct his tremendous vitality. In sheer robustness, he was a kind of giant; but he never discovered how to use his strength like a giant. But in this volume of short stories, Jack London was beginning to learn a certain artistic control. The first and last of them—"The Strength of the Strong," ingeniously describing the growth of capitalism and bureaucracy in the "progressive" stages of a primitive tribal society, and "Samuel," an impressive story of the intellectual persistence of an old North of Ireland woman, who called her sons Samuel successively, in spite of the fact that they all came to a violent end, and in spite of the hostile superstition of the locality—these stories, especially the last, come very near being literature. The others, vigorous, sincere, and straightforward as they are, are not half as good. And it is to be noted that "The Strength of the Strong" and "Samuel" contain none of those over-boisterous tricks of expression, none of that bewildered strain, none of that torrential display of wordiness, which some of Jack London's admirers professed to find characteristics of virtue.

"Ruggles of Red Gap," an American novel, spins out a lively story from a happy idea. Ruggles is the valet of the Honorable George, brother of the Earl of Brinsted, and is handed over to an American family in Paris as the forfeit of a lost game of cards. He is taken away to Red Gap, in the Middle West, a rising township, very anxious to cultivate the Correct English Tone. Through a mistake, he appears as Colonel Ruggles in the local newspaper, and plays that part for a while. By a diligent perusal of the "Declaration of

HOME AND COLONIAL STORES, LTD.

THE annual general meeting of this company was held on the 1st inst., at 2-4, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C.

Sir Charles E. G. Philipps, Bt., presided, and said he was sure the shareholders would sincerely sympathise with the Directors in having to meet them without the presence of their Chairman, Sir William Capel Slaughter, who was unfortunately unable to be present owing to a serious illness. They all hoped he would soon recover and be able to resume his duties. Sir William, however, had committed the speech he would have made to paper, which he, the Chairman, would read. Sir William pointed out in that speech that if they were gratified a year ago with the results then submitted, it was still more pleasing to be able again to present a balance-sheet showing such satisfactory results for the year under review. The net profits for the year had amounted to £256,877, or with the amount brought forward £307,894. The quarterly dividends on the 6 per cent. cumulative Preference shares, the 15 per cent. cumulative Preference shares, and the 15 per cent. cumulative Ordinary shares had been paid, and they proposed to place to reserve £54,164, to pay a dividend of 6s. per share on the "A" Ordinary shares, to place £2,000 to the sick fund, £30,000 as a special bonus for the branch staff, to set aside £20,000 for income-tax, and to carry forward £48,130. They would note that they had brought their reserve funds to the substantial figure of £400,000, of which £299,371 was represented by the new 5 per cent. War Loan.

The remainder for the most part was invested in redeemable securities, so that they could regard the depreciation shown at December 31st last with complacency. It was evidence, he thought, of the care that had been exercised in selecting securities for the investment of the Company's reserve funds. With regard to the year's trading, the conditions created and developed by the prolongation of the war, and by the increasing requirements of the Army, had resulted in higher markets and increased prices for most of the commodities sold by the Company. The Directors, while always mindful of the interests of the shareholders, had never lost sight of their customers. In pursuance of that policy they had studied to maintain selling prices at a reasonable level. That that policy had been successful was evidenced by the fact that their volume of trade had still further increased. In that connection he might say that the energy and loyalty of their staff had again largely contributed to the successful results of the year under review. In their report the Directors had made special acknowledgement of the assistance rendered by the staff throughout the year in increasingly difficult conditions. He, the Chairman, might add that more than 2,000 of their employees had joined the Colors.

Sir Charles Philipps concluded by moving the adoption of the report and the recommendations contained therein.

Mr. T. W. Davidson, in seconding the motion for the adoption of the report, made a sympathetic reference to the illness of Sir William Slaughter, and Mr. W. H. Prior voiced the sympathies of the staff.

The resolutions were carried unanimously, and the dividends as recommended were approved.

The Nation.

THE NATION is published weekly. Applications for copies and subscriptions should be sent to the Publisher, 10, Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.

Subscribers are asked to note that alterations of address for the current week's issue should reach the office not later than the first post Thursday morning.

"THE NATION" SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Inland—Yearly	26s.	post free.
6 Months	13s.	" "
3 Months	6s. 6d.	" "
Foreign—per annum	30s.	" "

BREAD FUND FOR PRISONERS OF WAR

(Registered Under the War Charities Act, 1916)

President: Admiral LORD BERESFORD, G.C.B.

Vice-President: Mrs. WILFRED HENDERSON.

Hon. Secretary: R. T. WARNER, Esq.

THE Funds of this organisation, which has supplied a large amount of Bread in weekly consignments to our Prisoners in Germany, are now approaching exhaustion.

The Central Prisoners of War Committee has approved of the continuance of the work, and this fresh appeal is therefore made for FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS, WHICH ARE VERY URGENTLY REQUIRED to enable the Committee to maintain the supply of Bread to Naval and Marine Prisoners.

6/- WILL KEEP ONE PRISONER SUPPLIED WITH BREAD FOR A MONTH

Please send DONATIONS and SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Hon. Treas., ALFRED J. BONWICK, Esq., 10, Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.

ORIENTAL STUDIES.

THE SCHOOL of ORIENTAL STUDIES, London Institution, Finsbury-circus, E.C. Courses are now being held in the Principal Languages of the Near, Middle, and Far East, and of Africa. Courses will also be given on Oriental Religions and Customs.

Intending Students are invited to apply at once to the undersigned. E. DENISON ROSS, Director.

THE LEYS SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE.

SCHOLARSHIPS, EXHIBITIONS, ETC. (£60-£10). MARCH.

Particulars from "Public Schools Year Book" or the Bursar. Affiliated Preparatory School, "Caldicott," Hitchin.

FOUNDED 1811.

CATERHAM SCHOOL, SURREY.

Splendid situation on North Downs, 500 ft. above sea level. 18 acres of playing fields, boys' gardens, &c. Large number of graduates on staff. Excellent equipment.

THE PUBLIC SPEAKER'S LIBRARY comprises HOW TO SPEAK EFFECTIVELY, 3rd Edition; SPEAKING IN PUBLIC (Fluency, &c.), 2nd Edition; and ELOCUTION IN THE PULPIT (4s. net each, postage 5d.). Also OUTLINES OF SPEECHES for Social Occasions, &c. (2s. net, postage 6d.). All by CHARLES SEYMOUR. (Simpkin, Marshall & Co.). All Booksellers.—For Syllabus of Chapters or prospectus of PRIVATE TUITION address Mr. C. SEYMOUR, 446, Strand, London.

Cheltenham For GOUT, OBESITY & RHEUMATISM
NATURAL Water
FROM ALL CHEMISTS 1/- PER BOTTLE

THE INDEX TO VOLUME XIX. OF THE NATION
is now ready and may be obtained free on application to the Manager.

Independence," he gradually unlearns all his English snobbery, and finally, becoming a notable of the town, does his best to quash the American version of it. The book would be more entertaining to an American than an English reader; but it is an exuberant frolic, sauced with good sense and an excellent capacity for direct narrative. True, we extract some private amusement from the author's conception of an English manservant's habits of conversation, and, like a good many American humorous novels, it is too long, over-elaborated, and rather apt to bang its jokes out flat upon the table. Still, it is a jolly piece, half-caricature, half-comedy, and makes a joyous parade of English solemnity.

If Mrs. Dudeney had forgotten that there was such a word as heredity, what an excellent novel she would have written! "This Way Out" is a tale of the Vagueners, a Cornish family—Jane, the plump, vulgar, Philistine sister, who writes the marketable trash of fiction, and John-Andrew her brother, who, in the belief that he can write literature, and in the egoism of his desire for notoriety, sponges on the earnings of the sister he hates and despises. Then Jane writes a play, "Cackle Street," which is really worth while, and John-Andrew, who is a complete failure, who mopes upon the unsuccess of vanity and whose wretched condition is vigorously rubbed in by his good-hearted but completely tactless sister, makes up his mind to murder her. It is just tolerable for him, so long as she writes the fustian of magazines, but her getting the better of him in literature he will not stand. He does not murder her, because Jane, perceiving his intention, puts an end to herself. John-Andrew appropriates "Cackle Street" and lives on its fame and proceeds. But the play hangs round his neck like the albatross round the neck of the Ancient Mariner, and Jane is still triumphant. He tries marriage, but his cold vanity cannot carry him through. Finally, as the only way out for him, he goes to the war. And, as a kind of annexe to this structure, full of sound composition, the incidents given free and natural play from a genuine psychology and a difficult and intriguing situation thoroughly well managed and conducted, we are provided with a kind of prologue, in which the principal characters of the book are given prototypes fifty years before. This lengthy prologue is not only grotesquely artificial in its events, and related about as clumsily and amateurishly as it could be, but it is completely superfluous. It does not add an ounce of value to the plot or characterization, and by being in such arbitrary juxtaposition to the main issue, spoils the continuity and impairs the clear impression of one of the best stories Mrs. Dudeney has ever given us.

The author of "Marshdikes" is, perhaps, a reader of Henry James. Practically the whole of her story hinges upon dialogue and delights in those suggestive and revealing subtleties, which make action so much more vivid and pointed than it really is. Unfortunately, Miss Ashton's characters do not respond to the promptings of their conversation; in fact, they run completely away with her. Marshdikes is the home of Celia and Michael Dittany. Their friend, Francis Harland, comes to visit them, and Michael, being liable to die at any moment from heart failure, enters into a kind of conspiracy with his wife to urge the careless, idle, cynical Harland into practical and ameliorative politics. Celia has already had love passages with Harland, is still in love with him, it seems. Anyway, when he hears of Michael's physical condition, and in response to Celia's entreaties, he contests an election, and even gets engaged to Letty Underhill, a fiery little feminist-egoist, as an earnest of reformation. Then, as we said, Miss Ashton's characters spurn the bit of dialogue and take to their heels. Michael, who is spoken of by all who came into contact with him in terms of hushed adoration, is a mere painted lath, and not all the dialogue in the world can make it clear why Celia should have forced Harland into an engagement with Letty. But things are worse than that. The conversational standards of high moral endeavor hardly apply to the actions of the characters. There is something indecent in the love-making of Celia and Harland, concealed in the pious affirmations of the virtue of Michael. But when Harland and Celia drag him off to the election, kill him by the strain of his exertions, and then get engaged less than a week after his death, the edifying polish of dialogue is quite unable to hide from the reader a situation which is not far short of revolting.

The Week in the City.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE's speech, with his long list of restrictions on imports and his correction of Sir Edward Carson's optimism, had a depressing effect upon the City and all its leading markets and exchanges. There is more criticism and a greater inclination to protest than might appear from a casual reading of the newspapers. Thus on Wednesday a meeting of merchants, salesmen, and distributing buyers at Covent Garden appointed a deputation to ask the Government to reconsider the order prohibiting the importation of apples, &c. Monetary conditions are rather jumpy. Thus on Wednesday money was wanted in the morning, but was almost unobtainable at under 4 per cent. in the afternoon. Discount rates also weakened. The suspension and irregularity of so many mails has, of course, impeded business, but in the last few days long-delayed letters have come in from America and Scandinavia. The sea losses are serious, but the military successes this week have given hopes that the peace with victory may be approaching. On the Stock Exchange markets have been lethargic, and there has been depression in Argentine Rails, thanks to the announcement of bad traffics. There has also been some weakness in rubber shares, following on lower rubber prices. Cunard shares, banks, and various home industrials have also weakened. Consols recovered to 52½ on Wednesday. The Loan results, announced by Mr. Bonar Law, were of course thought prodigiously satisfactory, though cautious men refuse to be very optimistic until they see what is the exact position of Treasury Bills a few weeks hence.

MEXICAN EAGLE OIL.

A surprising increase in profits is shown in the report of the Mexican Eagle Oil Company for the year ended June 30th last. The previous report covered a period of two years, for the directors were unable to present one at the end of 1914 owing to the disturbed state of the country. But a year ago profits were shown to be steadily increasing, and the latest report shows that the company has been able to face the difficulties of the situation in a way which few other Mexican enterprises have been able to do. The following table summarizes results for the past three years:—

	1914.	1915.	1916.
	\$	\$	\$
Trading Profit	9,688,975	11,215,500	17,064,386
Forward from previous year ...	4,356,540	4,168,420	4,622,227
	14,025,515	15,383,920	21,686,613
Transfer to Field Redemption and Reserves Accounts ...	5,857,095	6,561,692	8,259,172
	8,168,420	8,822,228	13,627,441
Distributed in Dividends	4,000,000	4,000,000	8,000,000
Carried forward	4,168,420	4,822,228	5,627,441

The accounts are stated in Mexican gold, which has a parity of 24½d., so that they are not affected by the heavy decline in the value of Mexican paper currency. Allocations to redemption and reserve funds are all increased, and after paying dividends of 16 per cent. on both preference and ordinary shares, as against 8 per cent. a year ago, the balance carried forward is increased by \$805,000. The balance-sheet shows that the company is in a strong position, and although the drilling programme was greatly restricted throughout the year, it is stated that the company has available all the oil production necessary for its full requirements. Business has also been handicapped by the requisitioning of a large number of Eagle Transport steamers for war purposes, and the position has been only slightly alleviated by chartering other steamers.

PLANTATION COMPANIES AND IMPORT RESTRICTIONS.

Fortunately for investors in rubber companies, the Prime Minister did not include rubber amongst the articles of which the import is to be prohibited or restricted. But there are many Java and Sumatra companies who have large areas planted with tea and coffee, and these will probably suffer to some extent—to the benefit of companies growing these commodities on British soil. On the other hand, the restrictions on the export of rubber from Java and Sumatra to the United States have been greatly modified, and certain companies are now allowed to export direct without a licence.

LUCELLUM.

c-
s
ts
m
m
a
at
n-
of
is
as
n.
a-
s,
in
s,
at
ck
en
nt
in
rd
so
ne
se
en
ct

rt
ne
vo
he
ut
nd
le
w
he
eo

386
227

613

72

41

00

41

a

vy

ms

er

nd

ce

et

gh

ut

he

ss

ge

nd

ng

he

es

ut

ge

ly

ng

he

ra

in

ce.